







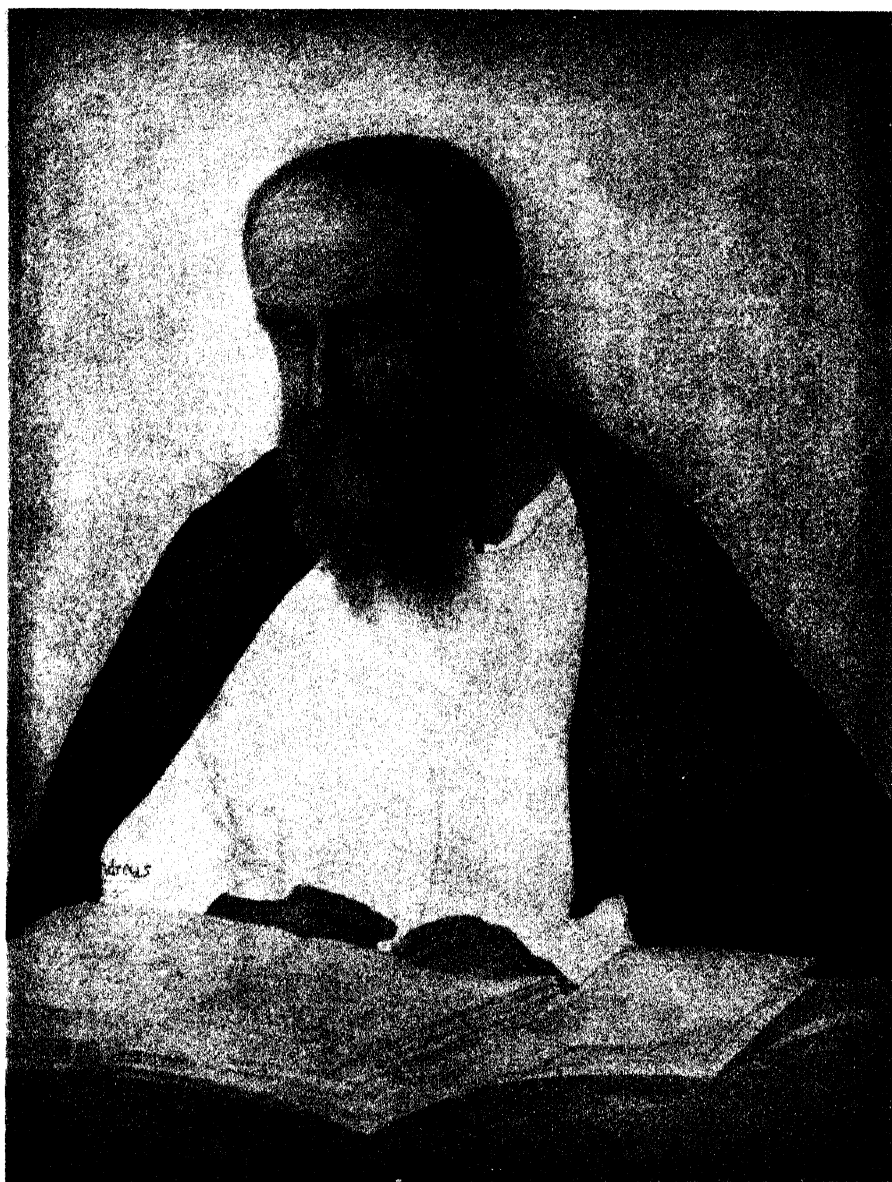
# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

**Vol. VI, Part I**

***New Series***

**1940**





PORTRAIT OF C. F. ANDREWS

By Abanindranath Tagore



# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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May

New Series, Vol. VI, Part I

1940

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## CHARLIE ANDREWS\*

Rabindranath Tagore

THE lifeless body of our beloved friend Charles Andrews is at this hour being laid to rest in the all devouring earth. We try to steel ourselves to endurance in this day of sorrow by the thought that death is not the final destiny of life, but we find as yet no consolation. Day after day, in the countless familiarities of sight and speech, love, the nectar of the gods, has filled our cup of life to the brim. Our minds, imprisoned in the material, have grown accustomed to depend on the bodily senses as their channels of communication with each other. When these channels are suddenly blocked by death, the separation is felt as an intolerable grief. We have known Andrews for long years, and in a rich variety of ways. Now we must accept our fate—never again will that dear human comradeship be possible. Yet our hearts grope yearningly for some assurance of hope and comfort in our loss.

When we are separated from a man with whom our relationship touched only the necessary business of life, nothing remains behind. We accept the ending of that relationship as final. The

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\* Mr. C. F. Andrews passed away in the early hours of the morning of 5th April. In the afternoon of the same day a service was held in the *mandir* at Santiniketan where Rabindranath Tagore addressed the inmates of the *asrama*. The speech has been translated into English for the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* by Marjorie Sykes. *Ed.*

gains and losses of material and secular chance are subject to the power of death. But the relationship of love, infinite, mysterious, is not subject to the limitations of such material intercourse, nor cabined and confined in the life of the body. Such a rare companionship of soul existed between Andrews and me. Coming unsought, it was a gift of God beyond all price. No lesser explanation on the human plane will suffice to account for it. One day, as if from nowhere, from one who was till then a complete stranger to me, there was poured out upon me this generous gift of friendship. It rose like a river from the clear spring of this Christian Sadhu's devotion to God. In it there was no taint of selfishness, no stain of ambition, only a single-minded offering of the spirit to its Lord. The question in the *Kena Upanishad* came into my mind unbidden : *By whose grace was this soul sent to me, in what secret is rooted its life ?* —

Rooted it was, I know, in a deeply sincere and all-embracing love of God. I should therefore like to tell you of the beginning of this friendship. At that time I was in London, and was invited to a meeting of English men of letters at the house of the artist Rothenstein. The poet Yeats was giving a recitation of some poems from the English translation of my *Gitanjali*, and Andrews was present in the audience. After the reading was over I was returning to the house where I was staying, which was close at hand. I crossed at a leisurely pace the open stretch of Hampstead Heath. The night was bathed in the loveliness of the moon. Andrews came and accompanied me. In the silence of the night his mind was filled with the thoughts of *Gitanjali*. He was led on, through his love of God, into a stirring of love towards me. Little did I dream that day of the friendship in which the streams of his life and mine were destined to be mingled to the end, in such deep intimacy, in such a fellowship of service.

He began to share in the work of Santiniketan. At that time this poor place of study was very ordinary indeed in outward appearance, and its reputation was very small. Yet, its

external poverty notwithstanding, he had faith in the spiritual purpose to which it was dedicated, he made it a part of the spiritual endeavour of his own life. What was not visible to the eye he saw by the insight of love. With his love for me he mingled a whole-hearted affection for Santiniketan. This indeed is characteristic of true strength of character, that it does not rest content with a mere outburst of emotion, but finds its own fulfilment in superhuman sacrifice for its ends. Andrews never amassed any wealth : his was a spirit freed from the lust of possession. Yet many were the times, ( how many, we can never know ) when, coming to know of something the ashram lacked, he found, from some source, sufficient for our need. Over and over again he begged from others. Sometimes he begged in vain, yet in that begging he did not hesitate to humiliate that "self-respect" which is the world's ideal. And this, I think, was what attracted him with special force—that even through a weary time of poverty Santiniketan strove faithfully for the realisation of its inner vision.

So far I have spoken of the affection of Andrews towards myself, but the most unusual thing about him was his devoted love of India. The people of our country have accepted this love ; but have they realised fully the cost of it to him ? He was an Englishman, a graduate of Cambridge University. By language, customs, culture, by countless links, the ties of birth and blood bound him to England. Family associations were centred there. The India which became the object of his lifelong devotion was far removed in manners and customs from his own physical and intellectual traditions. In the realisation and acceptance of this complete exile he showed the moral strength and purity of his love. He did not pay his respects to India from a distance, with detached and calculating prudence : he threw in his lot without reserve, in gracious courtesy, with the ordinary folk of this land. The poor, the despised, those whose lives were spent in dirt and ugliness—it was these whose familiar life he shared, time and time again, naturally and without effort. We know that this



manner of life made him very unpopular with many of the ruling class of this country, who believed that by it he was bringing the government into contempt, and they became his bitter opponents ; yet the scorn of men of his own race did not trouble his mind. Knowing that the God of his adoration was the friend of those whom society despises, he drew support and confidence from Him in prayer. He rejoiced in the victory of his Christian faith over all obstacles whenever by his agency any man, Indian or foreign, was freed from the bonds of scorn. In this connection it must also be said that he many times experienced unfriendliness and suspicion even from the people of our own land, and he bore this unmerited suffering undismayed as part of his religious service.

At the time when Andrews chose India as the field of his life work, political excitement and activity were at their height here. In such circumstances it can easily be understood how exceedingly difficult it would be for an Englishman still to maintain quiet relationships of intimate friendship with the people of this country. But he remained at his post quite naturally, with no doubt or misgiving in his heart. That in this stern test he should have held unswervingly to his life purpose is in itself a proof of his strength of soul.

I have thus had the privilege of knowing two aspects of the nature of my friend Andrews. One aspect was in his nearness to me, the very deep love with which he loved me. This genuine, unbounded love I believe to have been the highest blessing of my life. I was also a daily witness of the many expressions of his extraordinary love for India. I saw his endless kindness to the outcastes of this land. In sorrow or need they would call him and he would hasten to their assistance, throwing all other work aside, regardless of his own convenience, ignoring his own ill-health. Because of this it was not possible to tie him down to any of our regularly organised work.

It would be a mistake to think that this generous love of his was confined within the narrow limits of India. His love for

Indians was a part of that love of all humanity which he accepted as the Law of Christ. I remember seeing one illustration of this in his tenderness for the Kaffir aboriginals of South Africa, when the Indians there were endeavouring to keep the Kaffirs at a distance and treat them with contempt, and imitated the Europeans in demanding special privileges for themselves. Andrews could not tolerate this unjust spirit of aloofness, and therefore the Indians of South Africa once imagined him to be their enemy.

At the present time when a suicidal madness of destruction seizes our race, and in uncontrolled arrogance a torrent of blood sweeps away the landmarks of civilised human society, the one hope of the world is in an all-embracing universal charity. Through the very might of hostility arrayed against it there comes the inspiration of the God of the age. Andrews was the embodiment of that inspiration. Relationships between us and the English are rendered difficult and complex by their attitude to the privileges of race and empire. An Englishman who in the magnanimity of his heart endeavours to approach us through this network of artificiality, finds his way obstructed at every step. To keep an arrogant distance between themselves and us has become a chief element of their pride of race. The whole country has had to bear the intolerable weight of this indignity. Out of this English tradition Andrews brought to us his English manhood. He came to live with us in our joys and sorrows, our triumphs and misfortunes, identifying himself with a defeated and humiliated people. His attitude was absolutely free from any suspicion of that self-satisfied patronage which condescends from its own eminence to help the poor. In this I realised his rare gift of spontaneous universal friendship. A poet of our country once said :

"Man is truly lord of all,  
Higher than man is naught."

We quote this saying when it suits our convenience, but it is doubtful whether any other race equals us in our practice

of confusing the dubious accretions of communal tradition with the teachings of pure religion, and thereby dishonouring its essential truth. That is why, I must claim even in the face of ridicule, I have established in Santiniketan a little place of welcome for all men. Here, from a foreign land, I gained a true man. In this ashram he was able to give his whole heart to the work of reconciling men. This was my highest gain, a gain which is imperishable. Time after time and in place after place his conscience drew him into the field of political struggle, and sometimes too the peaceful atmosphere of our ashram was disturbed by his activities. But he soon realised his mistake, and to the very end he guarded the ashram from intoxication with the heady wine of politics.

This, finally, is what I would say to you who live in the ashram, in solemn confidence, at the very moment when his lifeless body is being committed to the dust—his noblest gift to us, and not only to us but to all men, is a life which is transcendent over death itself, and dwells with us imperishably.

## TWO POEMS\*

Rabindranath Tagore

### I

Far as I gaze at the depth of Thy immensity  
I find no trace there of sorrow or death or separation.  
Death assumes its aspect of terror  
and sorrow its pain  
only when, away from Thee,  
I turn my face towards my own dark self.  
Thou All Perfect, everything abides at Thy feet  
for all time.  
The fear of loss only clings to me  
with its ceaseless grief,  
but the shame of my penury  
and my life's burden  
vanish in a moment  
when I feel Thy presence  
in the centre of my being.

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\* Translated from the original Bengali by the author.

## II

Through death and sorrow  
there dwells peace  
in the heart of the Eternal.  
Life's current flows without cease,  
the sunlight and starlights  
carry the smile of existence  
and springtime its songs.

Waves rise and fall,  
the flowers blossom and fade  
and my heart yearns for its place  
at the feet of the Endless.

# MY LIFE STORY\*

C. F. Andrews

MY LIFE STORY has been on the whole a very romantic one. I was born in Carlisle on February 12, 1871, but my early days were spent in Newcastle-on-Tyne. I have always felt myself to be a Tyne-sider and loved intensely the North country of England. My mother was related by family tradition to the Highlands of Scotland, and my father came from the Eastern Counties of England, so that I have in my veins both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon blood.

We were a very large family of fourteen children, and one of the happiest households in the world. My father was a clergyman—an idealist—and almost indifferent to human affairs. My mother had to economise. She had to look after all the household matters, therefore probably I learned from her more than any one else, the faculty of using every moment of time in a thrifty manner. She had a very hard struggle bringing up a large family of sons and daughters, but we all helped one another, and there were few more charitable and contented families in the British Isles than ours.

In my boyhood we moved from Newcastle-on-Tyne to the Midlands, and my whole adult school life was spent at King Edward VII School, Birmingham. This school had the great tradition of being the Alma Mater of Westcott and Lightfoot and of Burne Jones, the artist. Both at school and at Cambridge University I was able easily to win sufficient scholarships to carry on my studies not only independently of our family resources, which were limited, but even to pay back into them from time to time, so as to help the younger members of the family.

At school and at college the athletic life had a very great

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\* This short autobiographical sketch was written in 1927 when the author was in South Africa.—*Ed.*

attraction for me. Therefore, it was easy for me to get into the cricket team at school and also to row for my college. In later years, when I was a Don at the University I was well-known on the river as a coach of college boats. Golf, also, had always a great attraction for me.

While at the University at Pembroke College, the passion of my early boyhood for adventure across the seas took possession of me, and became linked with a very deep religious conviction which had become at this time the centre of my life and character.

The first idea to attract me was the thought of going out to Central Africa and joining the University's mission in that part of the world. This desire to do pioneer work in Africa held my imagination for many years. I think I must have read every single book concerning adventures in Africa, whether secular or religious. The story of Livingstone's great marches across Africa fascinated me most of all.

At this critical moment a friendship came into my life which was of supreme importance to me, and shaped the whole of my future history. Basil Westcott, the youngest son of the saintly old Bishop of Durham, became my most intimate college friend. He had decided to go out to the Cambridge University Mission in Delhi as a teacher. This drew my attention to India as a possible field for my future life's work. But I had not yet made up my mind, and the call of Africa was still strong upon me.

Before leaving college in 1896, after spending there nearly six of the best years of my life, I had gained the practical certainty of a fellowship in my college when the next one should fall vacant. By this time I had become ordained and was deeply interested in the Labour movement from the Christian social standpoint. Canon Henry Scott Holland and the Bishop of Durham were the leaders of this movement, and they were my two great heroes.

Under this impulse, while waiting for a vacancy in the

college staff of my own college, it seemed good to learn at first hand something about the labour conditions in the slums of England. First of all I went to Sunderland in the north. There I spent a delightful time with the ship-builders, living among them almost as one of themselves. I had intended to continue in the North of England, near to my own birthplace, but the call came to me suddenly to undertake the headship of the Pembroke College Mission in the slums of south-east London near the Old Kent Road. There I lived for some years among the dock labourers and costermongers, in a district which was marked on Charles Booth's map as one of the black spots of poorer London.

It was one of the thieves' quarters ; my class of young men was composed almost entirely of pickpockets and thieves, some of them well known to the police. Drunkenness was rife in this district. It was not an unusual thing to be called up on Saturday nights to go out at midnight and put a stop to a drunken brawl in some part of the district where men and women were fighting.

Here my health broke down for the first time, and when an opportunity came to go back to Cambridge as a Fellow of my college to take up college duties, it was necessary to do so not only on account of the importance of the work among young Cambridge students, but also for health reasons. The strain of work in the slums of London had proved more than I could bear.

But all the while my heart was aching to go abroad. My friend, Basil Westcott, had died at Delhi under peculiarly pathetic circumstances. He had never been strong in health. One night he undertook the nursing of a young British soldier who had been suddenly attacked by Asiatic cholera in the Fort at Delhi. The next day Basil Westcott himself was a victim to the same fell disease. In a few hours his death came, and it was one of the greatest blows I had ever had in my young experience.

From the time of his death it seemed to me a sacred duty ( which I could not put aside ) to go out to India and take up his



work at Delhi. After four years' teaching work at Cambridge as a college lecturer and Don, I found myself on the way to India to join the Cambridge University Mission.

It is with some amusement that I remember how the boat that I was coaching on the river for the Lent races at Cambridge promised to send me a cable with regard to the result of their prowess on the river, which should reach me on the voyage out to India.

When I reached Port Said this cable was forwarded to me on board and, to my great delight, this last boat I had coached on the River Cam made its four bumps on four successive nights and thus gained its oars. The congratulatory cable was a pleasant experience on my voyage out to the East.

At Delhi it was necessary at first to settle down to the humdrum work of college life, teaching English history and English literature to Indian students. But I soon became elected to the Syndicate of the University and had a great deal of pioneer University work to perform which brought me into touch with the leaders of Indian thought. This opened my eyes to the great National Movement over the Continent of India.

The war between Russia and Japan had just come to its conclusion. The whole of India was tingling with the news of the victories of the East over the Western power of Russia. In many ways this was the greatest incentive of all, to the national movement which now spread over India. From the first, as an educationalist, the movement intensely attracted me by its potency for creating a new India, and, indeed, a new Asia, in which East and West should meet together.

Strangely enough, looking backward, it was at the very same time that the question of South Africa, in its relation to India, brought my thoughts back to my early desires to come out to Central Africa as a missionary.

The problem of the relation of South Africa to India, at that time, was concentrated in the question of the advisability or otherwise of sending indentured labour to Natal. Mr. Gokhale

had taken up this question very thoroughly indeed, and I had read what he and others had written about it. Also, I had come into touch with the leaders of the Indian educational renaissance. Thus I gained, at first hand, Indian opinion both with regard to indentured labour, and also to the problem of modern nationalist India as it was related to the new countries of Canada, Australia and South Africa.

Indian educated leaders pointed out to me that these young white nations were all shutting their doors to Indian immigration, while there was still being carried on, in many of the colonies, a disgraceful form of indentured labour, which was little else than servitude. They said that it was surely a crowning injustice that their educated Indian people should be shut out from these new lands, while their uneducated and illiterate Indian labourers should be taken away, against their own wishes, for the sugar plantations by a process of recruiting which was notorious under the name of "coolie catching". The subject fascinated me, because South Africa was at this time the scene of the great struggle against indentured labour. The longing came to me to go out to Africa and investigate the subject for myself.

When Lord Minto, who was Viceroy, summoned me in 1906, to ask my opinion with regard to the immigration of Indians into Natal, I had urged vehemently upon him the folly of continuing this indentured immigration under such degrading conditions. From Mr. Gokhale I had already learned that if this immigration into South Africa continued on these lines, it would inevitably bring with it a crucial situation which would endanger the friendship between India and the rest of the Dominions. Looking back, one can see that if this indentured Indian labour had been stopped thus early, much of the later Indian trouble would have been avoided.

After 1912, this problem became the central factor in my life. By this time, I had practically left my educational work at Delhi, and had been attracted to the service of education in the school of Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan. But just before

taking up this new work at Tagore's school, the poet very nobly gave me leave to go out to South Africa at a very critical moment. Thus I was able to take part in the great passive resistance struggle which Mr. Gandhi was carrying out in Natal for the purpose of abolishing the £3 poll tax.

After our landing, General Smuts called for a parley. Mr. Gandhi went up to Pretoria, taking me with him as his companion. Those were the days of the great syndicalist strikes on the railways and the gold mines. Pretoria and Johannesburg were under Martial Law. Trains were being dynamited, and life itself was unsafe.

It was in this atmosphere of storm and fury that peace was made on the Indian question. The famous Smuts-Gandhi Agreement was signed. It is of great interest to me now to remember that I was present when General Smuts put his own signature to the draft Agreement.

During the time I was resident in Natal, I saw something of the conditions of the indentured labourers in the Natal barracks. The enormously high suicide rate, within those barracks, deeply impressed me. Thus I went back to India more convinced than ever that the indenture system of Indian labour was not only a blunder, but a crime.

In the next year, which was the first year of the Great War, I was suddenly attacked in Bengal by Asiatic cholera. For thirty-six hours my life was entirely despaired of. Indeed, there is a grim humour in the fact that the grave which was to contain my mortal remains was dug in preparation for my burial.

For very many months after this, I hovered between life and death, as an invalid, with scarcely any strength left. It was during this period of convalescence that the facts came home to me, through a celebrated Blue Book, that the condition of indentured labourers in the Fiji Islands was worse than that which I had witnessed myself in Natal. The suicides were nearly double the Natal rate. This alone showed the unhappy condition of these Indian villagers, who had been inveigled out to this far

away land by the process of "coolie catching". Soon it came upon me that I must go out to Fiji.

Mr. W. W. Pearson, a son of Dr. Samuel Pearson, of Manchester, accompanied me to Fiji when I was well enough to go.

After our investigation there, we called on the return journey at New Zealand. Both there and in Australia we studied the policy of "White Australia", in its relation to India. We were both of us more than ever convinced that Mr. Gokhale's solution of the main problem was the right one, namely that all indentured and other forms of immigration from India should be abolished, on the clear understanding that Indians already domiciled within those vast Dominions should be treated with courtesy and respect.

The next year, the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, took me out with him as companion to Japan and China. There I had the most wonderful privilege of seeing at first hand the conditions of life in the Far East.

The next year, 1917, saw me again in Fiji. For I was obliged to go back there once more, in order to finish thoroughly the earlier investigations into Indian indentured labour conditions, with the idea of helping to bring that pernicious system finally to an end.

On my return to work at Santiniketan, this Indo-Dominion subject occupied my attention. Also, I was called in to arbitrate in labour matters. Thus I gained a very wide experience of Labour conditions in India. It was this experience and knowledge which brought at last to me a unanimous election, twice over, as President of the All-India Railwaymen's Union, the largest union of workmen in the whole of India.

Later on, also, this led up to my appointment as President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, and Chairman of the Trade Union Council.

It is very difficult to continue the series of events which have crowded in upon my own recent years. The chief of these

have been connected with Africa. Twice over, I had to go out to Kenya as a peace-maker in Indian affairs in those Eastern regions of Africa.

It is strange to look back and see how nearly half my life, in the last fifteen years, has been spent in Africa, while the other half has been spent in India. Thus the dream of my childhood, about coming out to Africa and making Africa my home, has become partly fulfilled. Every time that I have made the journey I have learnt to love Africa better. It is a continent that grips the heart.

This time, at the end of eight months' stay in South Africa, I am being called once more to journey widely to other parts before I return to the quiet and peaceful atmosphere of study at Santiniketan.

Let me describe, in conclusion, something of the life we lead at Santiniketan, in company with the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Whenever these wider activities allow me to return and settle down to study and work, the following is my experience at the school of the poet, which has become world-famous as an educational centre.

It is needless, perhaps, to say that in such a place and environment the dress and habits of the West which one naturally adopts in South Africa or other Western countries, are completely thrown aside. Like Dr. Pennell, on the Afghan border, it is absolutely necessary, in living such a life, to adopt the habits and dress of the country. Therefore I naturally live there in the simplest Eastern fashion, taking Eastern food and wearing Eastern dress.

Many people have asked me whether this has done any injury to my health. It is not possible to answer that question exactly. In some ways it has been very difficult from the health point of view ; but in other ways, it makes one more easily able to bear severities of the intensely hot climate in India.

Tagore himself rises at the very earliest hour of the

morning—even before the break of day. It has become a natural custom for me to rise very soon after he does, and spend the early morning hours in quiet and meditation. Probably it is this part of the life of the East which I miss most, and hunger for most, when I come out of that atmosphere and get to the West. The rush and hurry of Western life is extremely difficult after the peace and repose of Santiniketan days.

Rabindranath Tagore is a creative genius of the very first order, and he has allowed me to enter into his life and work, when I am able to be with him, to the fullest extent. In his daily habits he is full of simplicity and loving-kindness. He is a born teacher, and I have learned from him, more than any one else, what the true genius of the East means, as compared with that of the West. In no sense does he condemn or despise the West. Indeed, he has an instinctive attraction for the West. In the same way, the West has been attracted by him.

He holds, however, that the two forms of civilisation and culture—the Eastern and the Western—are vitally necessary, as complements of each other. He regards the East as in danger of stagnating, unless roused by the practical activity of the West. He regards also the West as in danger of rushing over precipices to ruin and destruction, unless steadied and helped by the calmer wisdom and older experience of the East. His own idea of the harmony of humanity is that the East and West should meet together. They must learn from each other their own different gifts. The spiritual genius of each must be developed by contact with its neighbour. East and West must unite in mutual respect.

Personally, I have never in my whole life met any one so completely satisfying the needs of friendship and intellectual understanding and spiritual sympathy as Tagore. His very presence always acts as an inspiration. To be with him, to be at unison with him in some creative work, is a privilege which it is very difficult to state in words. Indeed, it has been by far the greatest privilege of my life. No one has been more fortunate than I have, in personal friendships.

Side by side with this friendship with the poet, I have had the supreme happiness of a second personal friendship with Mahatma Gandhi ( as he is called ). His marvellous spiritual genius has appealed to me in a very different way. For his character, in its own way, is as great and as creative as that of Tagore himself. It is, however, of the more ascetic order. It has about it rather an air of the religious faith of the Middle Ages than that of modern times. Tagore is essentially a modern : Mahatma Gandhi is the St. Francis of Assisi of our own days.

You will understand, therefore, how eagerly I look back, when I am away in South Africa, to those friendships which are my very life in India. You will also realise how I long for the day to come when I can get back to India and live there again the life of the East, as I have lived here the life of the West.

## APPENDIX

[ *The following letter written by Mr. C. F. Andrews to S. J. Akhay Kumar Roy, his friend and co-worker at Santiniketan, is worth quoting here.—Ed. ]*

Sydney,

My dear Akhay Babu,

June 1, 1917.

I have been thinking about you so much again that I cannot help writing also to you. I have felt so very much this absence from the ashram and it does not seem to get any less.

You will remember how deeply touched I was when I first knew you by your little offering of flowers at the foot of my Mother's portrait on the Table in my room. I want to tell you something about her which has recently given me much joy. I think I told you once how she had felt most deeply the sufferings of the Indian women in South Africa about which I had written to her. And then in her last illness she urged me to go out to them and not to come back home first to see her. I had always felt after that, in a peculiar way, that she was present with me in this great struggle : and when I went out to Fiji before, I felt this very much indeed. Now this is what gave me great joy. On my Mother's Birthday itself this year which I was keeping and remembering out here in Australia the news came from England in the evening that on this very day Mr. Chamberlain had declared publicly in the House of Commons that the Indian indenture system would not be revived, ever after the war, but that it had come finally to an end. It seemed to me so very beautiful indeed—almost as a message from God—that on my Mother's own Birthday the very last step in abolition of indenture should be taken.

I have told this in letters to many whom I love and I felt that I should like to tell it to you also.

Your affectionate friend  
C. F. Andrews.



## MID-DAY\*

C. F. Andrews

How silent is the light !  
What depth is in the clear blue sky !  
The eyes grow weary of the dazzling light  
The forest depths are plunged in silence.

Who are these that pass so softly by the garden  
Wandering with soft whispers and still softer steps ?  
Ah, my heart, why despair at such an hour as this,  
Thy lute untouched, thy song of joy unsung.

Hushed in a sudden wonder with wide open eyes  
Life's narrow fretfulness is lost in light profound.  
What a glory of the sun floods the world !  
The light is still. How deep the sky !

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\* The manuscript of this poem was found among Mr. Andrews' papers.—*Ed.*

# GANDHIJI ON RICHES AND RICH MEN

Nirmal Kumar Bose

IN his earlier speeches, Gandhiji was in the habit of using passionate language against riches and rich men. A portion of the speech delivered in February 1916 on the occasion of the opening of the Benares Hindu University may be cited as a typical example :

“I now introduce you to another scene. His Highness the Maharajah who presided yesterday over our deliberations, spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers laid great stress upon it. But what did we witness in the great pandal in which the foundation ceremony was performed by the Viceroy? Certainly a most gorgeous show, an exhibition of jewellery which made a splendid feast for the eyes of the greatest jeweller who chose to come from Paris. I compare with the richly bedecked noblemen the millions of the poor. And I feel like saying to these noblemen : ‘There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India’ . . . Sir, when I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India, be it in British India or be it in India which is ruled by our great chiefs, I become jealous at once and I say : ‘Oh, it is the money that has come from the agriculturists.’ Over seventy-five per cent of the population are agriculturists and Mr. Higginbotham told us last night in his own felicitious language that they are the men who grow two blades of grass in the place of one. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us if we take away from them almost the whole of the results of their labour. Our salvation can only come through the farmer. Neither the lawyers, nor the doctors, nor the rich landlords are going to secure it.” (*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 4th edition. G. A. Natesan & Co. pp. 322-23.)

In the same year, he laid down in a speech at Madras,

something which may be considered to be his basic view with regard to economic morality :

“We are thieves in a way if we take anything that we do not need for immediate use, and keep it from somebody else who needs it. It is a fundamental law of Nature, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only every body took only enough for him and no more, there will be no poverty in the world, and there will be no man dying of starvation in this world. And so long as we have got this inequality, so long I shall have to say we are thieves.”

Then he went on to say,

“I am no socialist, and I do not want to dispossess those who have got possessions, but I do say that personally those of us who want to see darkness out of light have to follow this doctrine ( of non-thieving ).” ( *Mahatma Gandhi*, 1918. Ganesh and Co., Madras, p. 189. )

The same sentiment is expressed in his book entitled *Ethical Religion* ( date of first publication ? ) in the following terms :

“If all men realised the obligation of service, they would regard it as a sin to amass wealth ; and then, there would be no inequalities of wealth, and consequently no famine or starvation.” ( Chapter VIII. )

Gandhiji thus already held that the pursuit of wealth was a sin ; it made it difficult for a man to follow a truly moral life. Such a life could only be built upon the foundation of a voluntary restriction of wants. These were days when Gandhiji had not yet actively identified himself with the struggle for political liberation ; and so, more emphasis was laid by him upon voluntary effort than upon reform through State-made laws for the eradication of poverty. We shall see, later on, how his views on this subject underwent a certain amount of modification.

But there has always been another, and a more important, reason with him why he puts so much reliance upon voluntary effort for bringing about social equality. He considers that

"No action which is not voluntary can be called moral. So long as we act like machines, there can be no question of morality. If we want to call an action moral, it should have been done consciously, and as a matter of duty." (*Ethical Religion*, Chap. IV. )

If social equality were brought about through law, Gandhiji would not consider it to be an enduring thing. So he wrote in the *Harijan* of 29.6.35 :

"Brahma created his people with the duty of sacrifice laid upon them and said, 'By this do you flourish. Let it be the full-filler of all your desires' . . . 'He who eats without performing this sacrifice eats stolen bread'—thus says the Gita. 'Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow,' says the Bible. Sacrifices may be of many kinds. One of them may well be bread-labour. If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over-population, no disease, and no such misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love, for the common good. There will be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.

"This may be an unattainable ideal. But we need not, therefore, cease to strive for it. Even if without fulfilling the whole law of sacrifice, that is, the law of our being, we performed physical labour enough for our daily bread, we should go a long way towards the ideal."

Thus Gandhiji's attitude towards wealth and social or economic equality has been the same from 1916 to 1935. But his references to rich men have always been more subdued than towards riches in general. For he holds that a man is very often the creature of circumstances, and so deserves pity instead of condemnation, which should be reserved for the impersonal situation. Even so, there have been occasions when he has flared up against persons and classes, as the two following passages, written in 1924 and 1922, will show.

“What does the correspondent mean when he refers to ‘lower orders who know no responsibility and can anyway make both ends meet?’ Is he sure that ‘lower orders know no responsibility?’ Have they no feelings, are they not injured by an angry word? In what sense are they lower except in their poverty for which we middle class are responsible? And may I inform my correspondent that the ‘lower orders’ not only do not ‘make two ends meet’ but the majority of them are living in a state of semi-starvation? If the middle class people voluntarily suffer losses for the sake of the ‘lower classes’ it would be but tardy reparation for their participation in their exploitation. I invite the correspondent to think in terms of the masses and identify himself with his less fortunate countrymen.” (*Young India*, 17. 7. 24. )

“Little do the town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realise that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history.” (*Young India*, 23. 3. 22. )

Gandhiji has also been passionate in his appeal to the middle classes to dispossess themselves voluntarily.

“The village work frightens us. We who are town-bred find it trying to take to village life. Our bodies in many cases do not respond to the hard life. But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly, even heroically, if our desire is to establish Swaraj for the people, not to substitute one class rule by another, which may be even worse. Hitherto the villagers have died in

their thousands so that we might live. Now we might have to die so that they may live. The difference will be fundamental. The former have died unknowingly and involuntarily. Their enforced sacrifice has degraded us. If now we die knowingly, our sacrifice will ennoble us and the whole nation. Let us not flinch from the necessary sacrifice, if we will live as an independent self-respecting nation." ( *Young India*, 17. 4. 24. )

In 1927, Gandhiji addressed the students of the Benares Hindu University and said :

"Panditji ( Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya ) has collected and has been still collecting lakhs and lakhs of rupees for you from Rajas and Maharajas. The money apparently comes from these wealthy princes, but in reality it comes from the millions of our poor. For unlike Europe the rich of our land grow rich at the expense of our villagers the bulk of whom have to go without a square meal a day. The education that you receive to-day is thus paid for by the starving villagers who will never have the chance of such an education. It is your duty to refuse to have an education that is not within reach of the poor, but I do not ask that of you today. I ask you to render a slight return to the poor by doing a little *yajna* for them. For he who eats without doing his *yajna* steals his food, says the Gita. The *yajna* of our age and for us is the spinning wheel. Day in and day out I have been talking about it, writing about it." ( *Young India*, 20.1.27. )

His object in the propagation of Khadi was, as he said, the distribution of wealth among the toiling millions in place of its concentration into a few hands, as had been brought about through mills and machinery.

"I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of few, but in the hands of all." ( *Young India*, 13. 11. 24. )

"Our mills cannot today spin enough for our wants, and if they did, they will not keep down the prices unless they were compelled. They are frankly money-makers and will not therefore regulate prices according to the needs of the nation. Hand-

spinning is therefore designed to put millions of rupees in the hands of poor villagers. Every agricultural country requires a supplementary industry to enable the peasants to utilise the spare hours. Such industry for India has always been spinning.” ( *Young India*, 16. 2. 21. )

Addressing certain Zemindars in 1929, Gandhiji said,

“A model Zemindar would at once reduce much of the burden the ryot is now bearing, he would come in intimate touch with the ryots and know their wants and inject hope into them in the place of despair which is killing the very life out of them. He will not be satisfied with the ryot’s ignorance of the laws of sanitation and hygiene. He will reduce himself to poverty in order that the ryot may have the necessities of life. He will study the economic condition of the ryots under his care, establish schools in which he will educate his own children side by side with those of the ryots. He will purify the village well and the village tank. He will teach the ryot to sweep his roads and clean his latrines by himself doing this necessary labour. He will throw open without reserve his own gardens for the unrestricted use of the ryot. He will use as hospital, school, or the like most of the unnecessary buildings which he keeps for his pleasure. If only the capitalist class will read the sign of the times, revise their notions of God-given right to all they possess, in an incredibly short space of time the seven hundred thousand dung-heaps which today pass muster as villages can be turned into abodes of peace, health and comfort. I am convinced that the capitalist, if he follows the Samurai of Japan, has nothing really to lose and everything to gain. There is no other choice than between voluntary surrender on the part of the capitalist of superfluities and consequent acquisition of real happiness of all on the one hand, and on the other the impending chaos into which, if the capitalist does not wake up betimes, awakened but ignorant, famishing millions will plunge the country and which not even the armed force that a powerful Government can bring into play can avert.” ( *Young India*, 5. 12. 29. )

But the question naturally arises, how far can voluntary effort actually achieve the desired results? What are the chief obstacles, and can they be overcome without wide-scale political conflicts?

Speaking about the obstacles on the path, Gandhiji wrote in the *Young India* of 6. 2. 30, i.e. just on the eve of the Salt Satyagraha :

“The greatest obstacle in the path of non-violence is the presence in our midst of the indigenous interests that have sprung up from British rule, the interests of monied men, speculators, scrip holders, land-holders, factory owners and the like. All these do not always realise that they are living on the blood of the masses, and when they do, they become as callous as the British principals whose tools and agents they are. If like the Japanese Samurai they could but realise that they must give up their blood-stained gains, the battle would be won for non-violence. It must not be difficult for them to see that the holding of millions is a crime when millions of their own kith and kin are starving and that therefore they must give up their agency. No principal has yet been found able to work without faithful agents.

“But non-violence has to be patient with these as with the British principals. The aim of the non-violent worker must ever be to convert. He may not however wait endlessly. When therefore the limit is reached, he takes risks and conceives plans of active Satyagraha which may mean civil disobedience and the like. His patience is never exhausted to the point of giving up his creed.”

In his fight against any system, Gandhiji has always drawn a line between the system itself and its sponsors. To the latter he has given ample opportunity to mend their ways and reduce themselves to poverty voluntarily. But when that does not work quickly enough, he has advised non-violent non-co-operation. That too has been for him a means of conversion. In the *Young India* of 26.11.31, he wrote :



“The masses do not today see in landlords and other profiteers their enemy. But the consciousness of the wrong done to them by these classes has to be created in them. I do not teach the masses to regard the capitalists as their enemies, but I teach them that they are their own enemies.

“The system must be destroyed and not the individual. The Zemindar is merely a tool of a system. It is not necessary to take up a movement against them at the same time as against the British system. It is possible to distinguish between the two. But we had to tell the people not to pay to the Zemindars, because out of this money the Zemindars paid to the Government. But we have no quarrel with the Zemindars as such, so long as they act well by the tenants.”

But we have seen already what he expects of a model Zemindar, namely that they may retain their post of moral leadership and surrender economic gains completely.

Speaking to an audience of Indian socialists in London, in 1931, Gandhiji cleared this point still further.

“Q. How exactly do you think that Indian Princes, landlords, mill-owners and money-lenders and other profiteers are enriched ?

“A. At the present moment by exploiting the masses.

“Q. Can these classes be enriched without the exploitation of the Indian workers and peasants ?

“A. To a certain extent, yes.

“Q. Have these classes any social justification to live more comfortably than the ordinary worker and peasant who does the work which provides their wealth ?

“A. No justification. My idea of society is that while all are born equal, meaning that we have a right to equal opportunity, all have not the same capacity. It is, in the nature of things, impossible. For instance, all cannot have the same height, or colour or degree of intelligence, etc. ; therefore, in the nature of things, some will have ability to earn more and others less. People with talents will have more, and they will utilise

their talents for this purpose. If they utilise their talents kindly, they will be performing the work of the State. Such people exist as trustees, on no other terms. I would allow a man of intellect to earn more, I would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the father goes to the common family fund. They would have their earnings only as trustees. It may be that I would fail miserably in this. But that is what I am sailing for." ( *Young India*, 26.11.31. )

"Q. How will you bring about the trusteeship ? Is it by persuasion ?

"A. Not merely by verbal persuasion. I will concentrate on any means. Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary—a non-violent revolutionary. My means are non-co-operation. No person can amass wealth without the co-operation, willing or forced, of the people concerned." ( *Young India*, 26.11.31. )

Gandhiji's intentions are thus clear. He wants the dissolution of capitalism ; and he prefers the voluntary method. Where it fails, he employs the method of non-violent non-co-operation. He has often held that inequalities will remain till the end of time ; but that has been a concession to human weakness.

"My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realised. I therefore work for equitable distribution." ( *Young India*, 17.3.27. )

His non-violence "rules out exploitation" altogether ( *Harijan*, 21.5.38 ) ; i.e. in the non-violent civilization of his ideal, everybody is a labourer.

This approaches the Socialists' final ideal very closely, but there is a significant difference in emphasis. The question was asked him whether he would agree to State ownership of the means of production if the voluntary method failed. As long ago as 15. 11. 1928, he had written :

"According to me the economic constitution of India

and for the matter of that the world should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realised only if the means of production of elementary necessities of life remain in the control of masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be ; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others."

It was not clear in the above passage whether the ownership was to be vested in a centralized State in which the interests of the masses were supreme, or whether the latter were to hold the means of production, in a decentralized form, through ownership vested in village communities. So the questions proceeded.

"Q. Is love or non-violence compatible with possession or exploitation in any shape or form ? If possession and non-violence cannot go together, then do you advocate the maintenance of private ownership of land and factories as an unavoidable evil which will continue so long as individuals are not ripe or educated enough to do without it ? If it be such a step, would it not be better to own all the land through the State and place the State under the control of the masses ?

"A. Love and exclusive possession can never go together. Theoretically when there is perfect love, there must be perfect non-possession. Those who own money now, are asked to behave like trustees holding their riches on behalf of the poor. You may say that trusteeship is a legal fiction. But if people meditate over it constantly and try to act up to it, then life on earth would be governed far more by love than it is at present. Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on earth than by any other method.

“Q. If you say, private possession is incompatible with non-violence, why do you put up with it ?

“A. That is a concession one has to make to those who earn money, but who would not voluntarily use their earnings for the benefit of mankind.

“Q. Why then not have State-ownership in place of private property and thus minimize violence ?

“A. It is better than private ownership. But that too is objectionable on the ground of violence. It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself, and fail to develop non-violence at any time. The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence. Hence I prefer the doctrine of trusteeship.

“Q. Let us come to a specific instance. Supposing an artist leaves certain pictures to a son who does not appreciate their value for the nation and sells them or wastes them, so that the nation stands to lose something precious through one man's folly. If you are assured that the son would never be a trustee in the sense in which you would like to have him, do you not think the State would be justified in taking away those things from him with the minimum use of violence ?

“A. Yes, the State will, as a matter of fact, take away those things, and I believe it will be justified if it uses the minimum of violence. But the fear is always there that the State may use too much violence against those who differ from it. I would be very happy indeed if the people concerned behaved as trustees ; but if they fail, I believe we shall have to deprive them of their possessions through the State with the minimum exercise of violence. That is why I said at the Round Table Conference that every vested interest must be subjected to scrutiny, and confiscation ordered where necessary—with or without compensation as the case demanded. What I would personally prefer

would be not a centralisation of power in the hands of the State, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship ; as in my opinion the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum of State-ownership." ( *Modern Review*, October 1935, p. 412. )

When we examine the above statement carefully, we notice that although Gandhiji agrees with communists in so far as the ultimate ideal is concerned, he differs from them considerably in the emphasis which he lays upon voluntary effort as a means to that end. It almost appears that he thinks, men live by reason alone and not by habit ; and, moreover, that organizations of the character of the State are not necessary. He made it clear in the following passage that organizations were necessary, but they were to be of a voluntary character.

"Q. Then, Sir, shall we take it that the fundamental difference between you and the Socialists is, that you believe that men live more by self-direction or will than by habit, and they believe that men live more by habit than by will ; that being the reason why you strive for self-correction while they try to build up a system under which men will find it impossible to exercise their desire for exploiting others ?

"A. While admitting that man actually lives by habit, I hold that it is better for him to live by the exercise of will. I also believe that men are capable of developing their will to an extent that will reduce exploitation to a minimum. I look upon an increase of the power of the State with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress. We know of so many cases where men have adopted trusteeship, but none where the State has really lived for the poor.

"Q. But have not those cases of trusteeship which you sometimes cite been due to your personal influence rather than to anything else ? Teachers like you come infrequently. Would

it not be better, therefore, to trust to some organization to effect the necessary changes in man, rather than depend upon the casual advent of men like yourself ?

“A. Leaving me aside, you must remember that the influence of all great teachers of mankind has outlived their lives. In the teaching of each prophet like Mohammed, Buddha or Jesus, there was a permanent portion and there was another which was suited to the needs and requirements of the times. It is only because we try to keep up the permanent with the impermanent aspects of their teachings that there is so much distortion in religious practice today. But that apart, you can see that the influence of these men has sustained after they have passed away. Moreover, what I disapprove of is an organization based on force which a State is. Voluntary organization there must be.” (*Modern Review*, *ibid.* )

Lately, he has written in the *Harijan* ( 16.12.39. ):

“I am not ashamed to own that many capitalists are friendly towards me and do not fear me. They know that I desire to end capitalism almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced Socialist or even Communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ. My theory of ‘trusteeship’ is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity, it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory is compatible with non-violence. In the non-violent method the wrong-doer compasses his own end, if he does not undo the wrong. For, either through non-violent non-co-operation he is made to see the error, or he finds himself completely isolated.”

We may now attempt to sum up Gandhiji's views with regard to riches and rich men. Gandhiji holds that the aim of human life is the acquisition of abiding happiness. Such happiness does not come through riches. But a minimum of wealth is necessary to serve as the basis of “high-thinking”. The existing

distress of mankind is due to the operation of selfishness which resides in every breast. In order to overcome that selfishness and to make the lives of *all* men happy, we should dedicate ourselves to service. It should, however, be intelligent service, designed to bring to us a fuller realization of the unity of all human beings. Such a dedicated life, with its consequent philosophical realization, can alone give us abiding happiness. And it has to be built upon the foundation of a voluntary restriction of wants.

Men should be persuaded to shed their selfishness through non-violent non-co-operation. The basic economic equality, or rather equitability, will be reached when all have turned labourers and own the means of production jointly. The ownership should preferably be vested in voluntary organizations. But if that is not wholly possible, then it should be vested in the State to the necessary extent. The power of the State should be limited as far as possible. The object should be to preserve individual freedom, for real progress can only be built upon its foundation.

“The individual will not however have the freedom to exploit. That will be kept in check by intelligent non-co-operation.

“Where the rich do not dispossess themselves voluntarily, and where the poor are not sufficiently trained in non-violent non-co-operation to keep them in check, the State should step in, and dispossess the rich to the necessary extent through the minimum exercise of violence.”

This is how Gandhiji and the Socialists agree with each other with regard to their aim, but differ widely from one another with regard to the means.

## SOME REMINISCENCES OF C. F. ANDREWS

Gurdial Mallik

I FIRST met Mr. C. F. Andrews in 1917, at Bombay, on his return to India from Fiji where he had been on one of his periodical missions of peace in connection with the hardships of our countrymen abroad. It happened this way : in those days Sir N. G. Chandavarkar, one of the judges of the Bombay High Court, ( now dead ), used to take a class in Browning's poetry, every week, for a small group of select undergraduates from the various colleges in the city. On one occasion he was late in coming to the class and we were just wondering what had happened, because usually he was very punctual, when there walked in Sir Narayan, accompanied by Mr. K. Natarajan—the veteran editor of the *Indian Social Reformer*—and a clean-shaven, tall, well-built, handsome young Englishman. We all sprang to our feet to welcome the visitors. After they and we were seated, Sir Narayan straightaway began reading Browning's poem "Rabbi Ben Ezra", which he explained in his own inimitable way ( for he was an ideal teacher ). No sooner was the class over than we were introduced, one by one, to the young Englishman, who was no other than Mr. C. F. Andrews. As he held my hands in his and I gazed at his face,—“a compact of consecration and concord”,—I said to him in a voice, tremulous with deep emotion, “Sir, India is grateful to you for all that you are doing for her children.” He smiled and replied, “My young boy, it is the other way round. It is I who am grateful to India for being what I am.” I was at once struck with this observation, made in all sincerity and spontaneity, because, being one of those thousands of students who had been for some time swept off their feet by the wave of Westernism, I had never realized till then that my own country could ever be held in such high esteem by a “foreigner.”



Two years afterwards, in 1919, I went on pilgrimage to Santiniketan in order to pay my respects to Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore, to see whom I had been longing for full five years. When I arrived there at long last, as ill-luck would have it, Gurudeva was away to Calcutta on account of an attack of illness. Mr. Andrews, however, softened for me the shock of disappointment, by his overflowing affection. Gurudeva returned in due course to Santiniketan, but it was on the eve of my departure from there. So Mr. Andrews forthwith ushered me into his presence with the remark, "Gurudeva, here is a young pilgrim from Baluchistan. He has heard the call of your love and of Santiniketan." I touched Gurudeva's feet reverently and received his blessings in a manner, which released the thin stream of my spiritual life which had been buried for years under the deadening desert of dogma and institutional religiosity. Thus, it is to Mr. Andrews, that I owe the unforgettable occasion of my re-birth into the realm of the life of the Spirit.

I then returned to Karachi, where I was serving my apprenticeship in a mercantile office. But hardly had I settled down to my ledger-keeping when I received a telegram from Mr. Andrews asking me to join him at Lahore, where he was proceeding for the purpose of making inquiries into the terrible happenings of the Post-Rowlatt Act period in the Punjab. I obeyed the summons instantly and so had the happy privilege of being associated with his humanitarian work in the Punjab for several months. Many are the reminiscences of those days which I could recall, but I shall content myself with sharing with the reader only a few, chosen at random from my repertory.

Once in the course of our travels in the affected areas he visited a village, near Gujranwalla. He had heard that one of the retired Indian military officers there had suffered much during the Martial Law regime, because he had refused to be tutored into tendering evidence of a nature which was far from his own knowledge of the facts of the case. As a result, a

series of stripes were inflicted on his aged body. After half an hour's search we succeeded in locating this officer and Mr. Andrews begged of him to tell him what had been done to him. At first, he bluntly asked us to go away, saying he had nothing to impart, for he had had enough of Englishmen. But this Englishman, he did not know, was a coin of a different mint. Immediately Mr. Andrews embraced the officer, who was surprised beyond his wits to see a member of the ruling race behaving in that informal and affectionate fashion. "Brother," said Mr. Andrews, "do please tell me what they did to you."

The officer, whose suspicions about the *bona fides* of Mr. Andrews had by this time been dispelled, then stripped himself bare and exposed a body ghastly with lash marks. At first Mr. Andrews was unnerved but he soon recovered and his countenance beamed with divine tenderness. With eyes filled with hot tears, he fell down at the feet of the officer and, with hands folded and a voice choked with feeling, said, "Brother, on behalf of the English nation I beg your forgiveness."

The deep sounded unto the deep. The officer embraced Mr. Andrews and with a torrent of tears coursing down his cheeks, rejoined, "*Sabib*, as long as there is one Englishman like you in India, I can have the heart to forgive your whole nation."

It was then that the interpretation of C. F. A.—the initials of his name—as Christ's Faithful Apostle dawned first upon me. And was not his long life one unending apostleship of the Christ?

The scene is once again laid in a village, somewhere between Lyallpur and Sangla (both in the Punjab). The entire population, numbering several hundreds, had been punished because some of them, so it was alleged, had burnt an effigy of the King-Emperor on April 6, 1919. The result was that they were so completely terror-stricken that Mr. Andrews' repeated requests to many of them to unfold to him the sad tale of their suffering, had been so far turned down unceremoniously. He

and I, therefore, decided to leave the place the next morning after breakfast. At night Mr. Andrews was suddenly attacked with dysentery ; consequently he could not sleep and I kept watch by his bedside. I heard him, again and again, praying, "Lord, forgive them for they know not what they do." In the small hours of the morning, however, he rallied round somewhat and asked me to accompany him to the temple, saying, "I have faith that in the presence of God, they will feel bold and speak the truth." And his faith was justified by what followed. For, as soon as the divine service was over we entered the temple and everybody in the congregation looked up, when Mr. Andrews implored them to tell him the truth of the matter. And, lo ! the very priest, who had so long refused to open his lips, got up and related the whole story, from beginning to end, with child-like candour. It may be added that, later on, this version was found very valuable in unravelling the tangled skein of half-truths and hearsay.

✓ One day Mr. Andrews, with his *dhobi* tucked up to his knees and thin white muslin shirt unbuttoned, bare-headed and carrying a hand-bag, was seen walking down Harrison Road in Calcutta. It was morning and the newsboys were selling the daily newspapers. Beckoning to one of them he asked for a copy of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, which was readily handed over to him by the vendor. But imagine the latter's surprise when Mr. Andrews, after fumbling in his pockets for a one-anna piece, said to him that he had no money to make the payment. ( What had happened was that on his way from the railway station he had parted, as he used to do often, with all the change on his person to the first street-beggar. ) Consequently, he returned the paper to the news-boy who was all the time looking intently at the face of his Christ-like customer. The boy gave it back to him, and saying, "Are you not Andrews *sabib* ? I shall not take any money from you," ran away. Some weeks afterwards Mr. Andrews slipped a rupee into the hands of this young admirer of his who had honoured him with his trust.

Many years ago a high official of the Bengal Education Department,—an Englishman—visited Santiniketan and stayed for a day in the Guest-house. It was summer, when the thermometer often touches 112°. Mr. Andrews went to see him at noon. He was dressed in the Santiniketan style, *dhoti*, shirt and hat, while the visitor, in spite of the sweltering heat, was wearing a smart lounge suit. The official was very much put out by one of his fellow-countrymen appearing before him in the dress of the “uncivilized natives”, and he burst out, “Mr. Andrews, are you not ashamed of yourself? Is this dress of yours in conformity with the dignity and decorum of Englishmen?” Mr. Andrews only smiled and went away, saying he would be back soon and join him at lunch. And lo! the horror of horrors, when about half-an-hour later he returned, *minus* his shirt, and sat down at the table, opposite the hundred-percent little Englander! ✓

(Mr. Andrews usually travelled third, except when his health was not good, during his six-month sojourn in the Punjab in 1919. On one occasion, however, he purchased an intermediate-class ticket. At one of the small stations, he noticed an aged Hindu woman being helped in getting into a third-class compartment. She was crying in pain because of some physical infirmity. Immediately he got down and going up to the sufferer, said, “*Mata, ap us gari men baitthen*” (Mother, sit in that compartment). At first she refused but eventually she was won over by the child-like, persistently persuasive love of that angel of mercy, who himself took his seat, instead, in a third-class compartment. .

It was raining very hard. Mr. Andrews was at his desk and writing an article for the press. Suddenly, at the door, there appeared a blind Santhal, wearing a scanty loin-cloth and supporting himself on a stick. He sat down with his face turned

towards Mr. Andrews. Only when the latter got up after some time to take out some paper from his suit-case, did he see his visitor. So along with the particular paper that he wanted to find out, he also took out a brand new English suit, which Swami Shraddhanand had got made for Mr. Andrews as part of the latter's outfit for going abroad. Then raising the visitor and embracing him with deep affection, he gave him the suit and resumed his writing.

Let me conclude with my last reminiscence of that painful period. We were staying in a certain town in the Punjab. Mr. Andrews thought that he would attend the Sunday service in the local church and asked me if I would also go, to which I agreed. And so we went to the church. When we reached there, the congregation had already gone in. So we walked in on tiptoe and took our seats in the last row. Now somebody who was sitting near the pulpit saw us entering and, though most of the people sat with heads bowed in silent adoration, he at once came up from behind and pulled us out. On being asked by Mr. Andrews why he had acted in that peculiar way, the gentleman retorted, his face flushed with fury, (presumably he had heard of Mr. Andrews' work of inquiry into the events and injustices of the Martial Law regime), "This house of God is not for rebels."

"But Christ was a rebel, too," answered Mr. Andrews with the joy of resurrection in his eyes, as he walked away. ✓

# POETRY AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE EGO

Dr. A. Aronson

ANYONE studying the psychology of artistic creation will realize the difficulty of drawing the exact borderline between the normal and the abnormal, the sane and the insane. This difficulty is due to the fact that a scientific investigation into the origin of the creative art-impulse, both individual and collective, has to face problems mostly belonging to the realm of Abnormal Psychology. In the same way in which the biologist looks at the behaviour of lower organisms through a microscope and comes to conclusions regarding the peculiar behaviour of some tiny individual organisms, a sociologist or psychologist deduces from his observation of human beings certain general laws regarding "normal" standards of behaviour or activity and their deterioration into the abnormal and the insane. The true test of such a law lies in its application to given individual and social conditions. With regard to artistic creation these general laws have failed to a considerable extent to elucidate its place and function in both the life of an individual and that of a collective body. And while we know almost everything about the behaviour and activities of lower organisms, we do not know much about the impulses of human beings which make them in an essentially unbiological way create something out of nothing, be it a poem, a piece of music, a painting, a new system of philosophy, in short "culture". It is with this creation of culture, a phenomenon not to be met with among other living organisms, that both the sociologist and the psychologist have to deal.

Much has been written lately on dreams, their essence, their interpretation, and their functional importance in human life. According to modern psychology and especially psychoanalysis, day-dreaming has a very important function to fulfil in the life of every adult individual ; in fact, it serves the purpose

of an escape from reality, a voluntary withdrawal from an existence in which it is so much easier to be unhappy than to be happy. This peculiar phenomenon is to be found both among normal adults and neurotics ; in its diseased form we shall find it altogether divorced from logic, creating fantasy-pictures which have a reality of their own, but which are certainly unrelated to actual conditions of existence. The extreme type of this "autistic thinking" by means of which happiness is achieved and wishes are fulfilled, is to be met with among the schizophrenic insane ; in his case the repressed tendencies that dominate his autistic thinking are more completely repressed until dissociation takes place and reality and dream are no longer distinguished. There is, however, no doubt that for the insane, autistic thinking has a logic of its own, a kind of associative continuity in ideas, imagery, and emotions. It is this very continuity in associations, this peculiar logic inherent in the repressed instincts and desires that break through whenever autistic thinking is substituted for direct experience, that establish a natural link between the wish-fulfilments of an insane and the day-dreaming of a poet.<sup>1</sup>

This does not imply that every poet is a potential patient of schizophrenia ; but it certainly means that tendencies that are normally repressed by adults find an outlet in artistic creation, in which both the wish-fulfilment and the escape from reality play an essential part. On the other hand, not every schizophrenic patient is a potential poet, but we may certainly say that his existence is one of infinite possibilities where anything might be attained—in "imagination." We read, in fact, that considering the schizoid material as a whole

"we can form a continuous series, beginning with what I call the 'Hölderlin type', those extremely sensitive, abnormally tender, constantly wounded, mimosa-like natures who are 'all nerves'—and winding up with those cold, numbed, almost lifeless ruins left by the ravages of a severe attack of *Dementia Praecox*, who glimmer dimly in the corner of the asylum,

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1. cf. Prof. Bleuler : "Autistic Thinking." In : *American Journal of Insanity*, Vol. 69.—quoted in W. McDougall's *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, 1926, p. 208seqq.

dull-witted like cows . . . The half-dead schizophrene will, if he is educated, become an actor or a musician during the transitional stage. The exhibition of oneself is still an excitement : perhaps he will even become a futurist painter, an expressionist poet, an inventor, or a builder of abstract philosophical systems."<sup>1</sup>

Hölderlin was a German poet who lived towards the beginning of the 19th century ; he was probably the most "poetical" of all the German poets, and he lived the last forty years of his life in an asylum. There is, however, no reason to suppose that this type of schizothymic personality is limited to Germany alone ; the repression of memories of experiences inspired by fear or of others coloured by sex emotion, is common to all races and so is also the resulting complex formation. There is no doubt that the explosion of affects, the psychological phenomenon that Jung called *Abreaktion*, may lead in the case of the artist either to artistic self-expression or, if the "abreaktion" fails to occur, to a state of mind bordering on insanity. Self-expression in this sense means an attempt to reintegrate once more into consciousness the complex that has become autonomous. If the artist fails at this reintegration he is liable to suffer from morbidity, melancholy, numbness, and other states of mind that we commonly associate with the mental life of the neurotic. In the biographies and letters of poets we find from time to time a hint at what a poet feels like, if for a long time he has failed for one reason or another to sublimate his affects :

"I had become all in a tremble for not having written any thing of late—the sonnet over leaf did me some good. I slept the better last night for it."<sup>2</sup>

And "I never was in love—yet the voice and shape of a woman has haunted me these two days—at such a time, when the relief, the feverous relief of poetry seems a much less crime. This morning poetry has conquered. I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life—I

1. Dr. E. Kretschmer : *Physique and Character*, 1925, quoted in McDougall, *op.cit.* p. 884.

2. John Keats : *Letters*, edited by Maurice Buxton Forman, 1981, p. 21.



feel escaped from a new strange and threatening sorrow—and I am thankful for it.”<sup>1</sup>

The way in which such an explosion of affects takes place in the case of a poet is more a matter of technique and does not concern us here. The sublimation of repressed instincts, desires, and fear-complexes with regard to a normal adult is most frequently a new attempt to adjust himself both socially and “culturally” to actual conditions of existence. And in most cases this re-integration will be successful. The poet has to take a roundabout way. The unconscious itself will have to break through ; and reality will be replaced by fantasy-formations.

Such a process is no doubt best achieved in dreams both during day-time and at night. There is no reason to doubt Coleridge’s statement that “Kubla Khan” was written during sleep. Sometimes the very best poems of a particular writer are written in this automatic sort of way, the poet himself being almost unaware of what he was doing. Keats, for instance, says with regard to the Sonnet to Burns in one of his letters : “This sonnet I have written in a strange mood, half-asleep . . .”<sup>2</sup> If we apply standards of “normal” behaviour to this type of activity, we shall most probably reach the conclusion that a poet’s mental status is of a different order altogether and we shall find in him elements of intellectual and emotional habitus belonging to the neurotic as well as to the magician of a primitive tribe. And the effects of writing poetry or of the temporary inability to express himself, remind us of the emotional attitudes of a normal individual who either finds satisfaction in an *alter ego* or for some reason or other is unable to fulfill his wishes and desires in the company of his beloved. In the case of very sensitive writers the poem, therefore, takes the place of this *alter ego* and only by way of self-expression will satisfaction be obtained. In the case of Keats, for instance, it seems as though

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1. Ibid. p. 288.

2. Ibid. p. 178.

the poem itself is substituted for the person of the beloved and his individual happiness or unhappiness made to depend entirely on his ability to write. The result is frequently a struggle within the poet himself between his wish-aspirations and the unsatisfactory realisation of the wish. It is, we may almost say, a perfectly Freudian situation :

"At this moment I am in no enviable situation—I feel that I am not in a Mood to write any to-day : and it appears that the loss of it is the beginning of all sorts of irregularities . . ."1

"I hope soon to be able to resume my work—I have endeavoured to do so once or twice but to no purpose—instead of poetry—I have a swimming in my head—And feel all the effects of a Mental Debauch—lowness of spirits—anxiety to go on without the power to do so . . ."2

"I have been writing very hard lately even till an utter incapacity came on, and I feel it now about my head : so you must not mind my little out of the way sayings . . ."3

Sigmund Freud in one of his shorter "papers" on applied psycho-analysis attempts to establish a relation between the poet's creation and his autistic thinking, which he calls day-dreaming. The poet, he says, has this in common with the child that he builds a world of his own in his imagination just as the child does, and he orders this imaginary world in a way that pleases him better than reality. Day-dreaming for the poet is a kind of substitute for the child's play. Now, in any traumatic situation occasioned by some event in the present, the poet will take refuge in day-dreaming, and will create an unreal situation which will in itself be a continuation of the child's play. He will "remember" the happiness of his childhood, and this memory will dominate his day-dreams. This constant pre-occupation with his own individuality, and especially with his own unconscious, characterises both the child and the poet. The statement that a poet's creation ultimately derives from some memory of

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1. Ibid., p. 81.

2. p. 85.

3. p. 41.

his childhood, is, however, only an hypothesis and it would indeed be difficult to prove. But the seriousness with which he deals with himself is beyond doubt, and reminds us of the same type of seriousness with which the child considers the idle dreams of his imaginations.<sup>1</sup> We have seen, however, that to take the creations of one's own fancy seriously is one of the essential characteristics of the neurotic mind. Intellectual Narcism and the regressive tendencies involved in it, are part of the make-up of a poet and a neurotic. This earnestness combined with a very strong belief that the world created in imagination is real, whereas Reality outside himself is nothing but dream, or rather, a chaotic nightmare, leads to an overestimation of all psychic facts, a belief that the outer world can be changed by a mere *thought* of his. The proto-type of this intellectual narcissism can be found among primitives or savages, where fantasy-creations take the place of reality not only in religious life, but even in their commonplace daily occupations. It is this "Omnipotence of Thought" of which Freud speaks so frequently that establishes a link between both the poet and the neurotic and the savage. The intellectual narcissism of the savage by means of which he transforms his dreams and his fantasy-creations into "reality" and actually believes in them as in something "real" shows quite clearly that an interpretation of the poet's creation in terms of Abnormal Psychology will never be able to cover the whole ground; for there is no reason to suppose that a primitive tribe is composed of neurotics only. Magic and all it implies for the savage, seems to have deeper roots in the human soul than can be explained by a study of Abnormal Psychology. And the application of intellectual narcissism to art and its magic implications seems to be justified :

"Only in one field has the omnipotence of thought been retained in our civilisation, namely in art. In art alone, it still happens that man

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1. of. S. Freud ; *Coll. Papers*, vol. iv, 1925 : *The Relation of the Poet to Day-dreaming*, p. 178 sqq.

consumed by his wishes, produces something to the gratification of these wishes, and this playing, thanks to artistic illusion, calls forth effects as if it were something real. We rightly speak of the magic of art and compare the artist with a magician. But this comparison is perhaps more important than it claims to be. Art, which certainly did not begin as art for art's sake, originally served tendencies which to-day have for the greater part ceased to exist. Among these we may suspect various magic intentions."<sup>1</sup>

It is here that we have to discuss the functional importance of repression for the creation of art and culture in general. Only those impulses will be repressed that might be harmful either to other individual members of the group or to the group at large. This repression and the ensuing complex formation is not a voluntary privation of happiness; it is forced upon the individual by laws both written and unwritten that limit the individual's self-expression, his conduct, behaviour, and all his activities, to what is considered to be "decent" and harmless in the social sense of the term. The necessity of laws, however, arises only if there is a strong inclination in the individual members of the group to do what is prohibited and forbidden. At the basis of all observance of the *taboo* therefore stands a renunciation of all those impulses that might justly be called a-social and which, because they are a-social, are by far the strongest. An impulse that is taboo, and this applies especially to sexual impulses and those coloured by intense emotion, will try to break through in one way or another. In this connection it is useful to know that a repressed instinct is liable to develop in a more unchecked and luxuriant fashion, if it is withdrawn from consciousness. What originally might have been a feeble impulse to do "something forbidden" will become, as long as it is repressed, an extraordinarily dangerous craving for the satisfaction of this particular instinct. This craving for imaginary satisfaction is to be found in neurotics and artists alike, only that the expression of the instinct, the violent explosion of affects, is essentially

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1. S. Freud : *Totem and Taboo : Resemblances between the psychic lives of savages and neurotics*, p. 160.

chaotic in the case of the neurotic, whereas it is well-balanced, at least to a certain extent, with the artist :

"In one way the neuroses show a striking and far-reaching correspondence with the great social productions of art, religion and philosophy, while again they seem like distortions of them. We may say that hysteria is a caricature of an artistic creation, a compulsion neurosis a caricature of a religion, and a paranoiac delusion a caricature of a philosophic system. In the last analysis this deviation goes back to the fact that the neuroses are a-social formations ; they seek to accomplish by private means what arose in society through collective labour."<sup>1</sup>

Freud's hypothesis in this statement is that the craving for a satisfaction of the repressed instinct is equally strong in a neurotic and in an artist, but that in the case of the former the expression given to it is a-social, whereas the latter's creation will be based to a considerable extent on the collective experiences of the group, and will therefore in its essence be a social activity.

In every individual we find this struggle between what he desires most and what is imposed upon him from his very early childhood by the social forces of family and group life in general. In the case of a normal adult these prohibitions from outside will be absorbed almost automatically and he will behave and act according to the given standards of his society. After the direct influence of education has ceased and the taboo-material has been thoroughly assimilated, the Ego will find himself no longer watched by the social forces from outside, but by some inner automatic mechanism which we commonly call "Conscience". It implies a sense of guilt, fear, or shame with regard to all the repressed impulses which from time to time break through in their "pure" or sublimated form. In the well-balanced mind of a normal adult the super-ego will keep watch over the real Ego, and whenever a conflict arises between the two tendencies the super-ego will almost automatically win the upper hand. It is the striving after an ideal, the dualism in every soul of a human being, that itself has become a habit, a kind of second

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1. S. Freud, *ibid.* p. 128.

nature. Conscience, in this sense, is a habit-formation of utmost importance in all social life. Without this conscience or super-ego imposed from outside and without this dualism, no social life would be possible, and lastly, no culture could be created.

It may be for some a bitter truth to realise that human relationships and the building of culture is based upon a sense of guilt, shame, and fear. When Hamlet says "thus conscience does make cowards of us all..." he most probably voices the discontent of numerous intellectuals, artists, or philosophers, and their awareness that culture has been paid for at the price of happiness and that unrestrained action will lead to a breakdown of culture; and yet they know that true happiness lies exactly in those unrestrained actions which in their essence must necessarily be a-social. Hamlet's impulses are at bottom a-social and through being repressed for a long time they seem to grow in magnitude and force; and yet all he can do is to "protest". The poet is throughout his life in a similar position. He will "protest" against the "cultural privations" that dominate the whole field of his relations with other human beings; he will find satisfaction, and even happiness, in his protest, and his wishes and desires for "unrestrained action" will be fulfilled in his artistic creations. Hamlet's monologues are substitute gratifications in the same way as for instance, Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*.<sup>1</sup> The greater part of a man's life is, therefore, filled with attempts at compensation-formations replacing the suppressed instinctual drives. But the dualism between the ego and the super-ego, or rather the unconscious and the conscious, will remain visible in the work of the artist, whereas it will have vanished altogether from the behaviour, conduct, and activities of a normal adult. In case it should break through in form of "brute force" or an attempt at unrestrained instinctual gratification, there are Laws that will successfully prevent any further violent explosion of affects. Although the poet does not "act",

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1. of. S. Freud : *Civilisation and its Discontents*. 1990. ( International Psychoanalytical Library, No, 17. ) p. 68sq.

the very expression of his struggle, the dualism that is so obvious in his poems, makes him a social outcast, one whose profession is frequently regarded as doubtful, demoralising, and not conforming to the standards of the group :

"Human life in communities only becomes possible when a number of men unite together in strength superior to any single individual and remain united against all single individuals. The strength of this united body is then opposed as "Right" against the strength of any individual, which is condemned as "brute force." This substitution of the power of a united number for the power of a single man is the decisive step towards civilization. The essence of it lies in the circumstance that the members of the community have restricted their possibilities of gratification, whereas the individual recognizes no such restrictions."<sup>1</sup>

Society has not restricted Art. As long as it remains a substitute activity it is tolerated by most civilised countries. In religion it has not only tolerated, but even to a large extent encouraged collective attempts at substitute gratifications. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say, that both art and religion in modern civilised society constitute natural outlets for repressed instinctual urges of the individual and the group at large.

Each social change, therefore, determines in the most automatic way a new kind of outlet for violent explosions of affects, in short the way in which poetry should be written. By means of his own habit-formations the poet will be guided towards the right kind of outlet ; he will give expression to those impulses only that had to be suppressed because of this social change and we shall, on the other hand, not find in his poetry an expression of those emotions that could to a large extent be satisfied by direct experience, and therefore need not be expressed in form of a substitute activity. Sigmund Freud in some of his later books realized the magnitude of the task still before him, namely to adjust his theories to the ever-changing social conditions of human existence, to distinguish between the pleasure-principle or the standards of happiness in *different*

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1. S. Freud, *ibid.* p. 59.

societies and at *different* times. Instinctual gratifications that are "taboo" to-day, have not been prohibited in the Middle-ages, and a typically "modern" conflict or emotional tension might have been unknown and "undreamed" of during the reign of Louis XIV. And if we follow the poet, his ego and his super-ego, throughout the history of modern Europe we shall find changes of the utmost importance for an understanding of the psycho-genesis and socio-genesis of modern poetry, and of modern art in general.

The various affect-regulations imposed upon the individual by society will, therefore, determine the kind of poetry written at a particular time. The super-ego, or what we have called Conscience, will be formed from very early childhood whenever in the process of educating the child, a strong sense of shame, guilt, or fear is created, especially with regard to the expression of affects, intense emotions, or instinctual gratifications. Conscience that has become a habit, conduct and behaviour that are automatically regulated, will always lead to repressions, and will find their way into poetry in the form of substitute gratifications or wish-fulfilments; and with a gradual evolution of society and its standards of behaviour and conduct, the standards of individual conscience will change also, and it is this change that we shall find reflected in poetry:

"Whether innate tendencies are repressed, sublimated, or given full play depends to a large extent upon the type of family life and the tradition of the larger society . . . Consider for example, the difficulty of determining whether the aversion to incestuous relationships has an instinctive basis, or of disentangling the genetic factors underlying the various forms of sexual jealousy. The inborn tendencies, in short, have a certain plasticity and their mode of expression, or sublimation is, in varying degrees, socially determined."<sup>1</sup>

A genetic study of poetry, for instance, will show us that throughout the Middle-ages in Europe and well into the Renaissance free expression was given both in poetry and in prose to

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1. M. Ginsberg : *Sociology*, London, 1984, p. 118.



affects coloured by strong sex-emotions, that there existed a complete lack of restraint with regard to a detailed description of sexual life among the various classes of people, and that the way in which those emotions were expressed show a complete absence of a sense of guilt, shame, or fear. Whether we look at Erasmus' book on the sexual education of children, at Boccaccio in Italy, Rabelais in France, or Thomas Nashe in England, everywhere we find a natural and direct expression of affects, which in modern times, if these writers were not considered to be "classics", would be called "obscene", "indecent", or simply "disgusting". If, however, we look at any book written during the 19th century, we shall hardly find the same type of frankness and directness in the expression of emotions. Between the 15th and 19th century affect-regulations have taken place which led to a repression of instinctual gratifications, and to all sorts of substitute activities both among people in general and poets. The affective life of the individual in the newly created middle-classes has been pushed back into the narrow limits of the family, into secrecy and privacy, and is no longer part of social conduct. The development of a very strong sense of shame has made it impossible for the writer to mention those facts of emotional life that in former centuries were taken for granted by everybody. Language itself had to undergo a similar change. And a socio-genetic study of language might show how it adapted itself throughout the times to the ever-changing standards of behaviour and conduct, and how words that were once on the lips of every aristocrat, are to-day taboo in a middle-class society. *There is no doubt that a regulation of affects takes place whenever in a society the factors determining physical as well as commercial supremacy are monopolised within the social group.* Such a process towards monopolies covering almost all the field of social, political and economic life is observable in the West from the Middle-ages to our own time. These monopoly-formations always imply a gradually growing interdependence among human beings, first

within a small feudal state, then within society at large with its geographical and linguistic boundaries, and lastly today covering all civilized countries. The more this interdependence, which is both functional and institutional, grows, the more is the individual menaced in his social existence, especially if he wants to give way to his emotions and passions. This gradual monopoly-formation and the resulting interdependence among human beings brings about the necessity of repressing the ego with all its primitive urges and its aspirations towards instinctual gratification. This slow process is observable already among the aristocratic classes, first during the feudal times of the Middle-ages and later on during the 17th and 18th centuries; "civilised" behaviour and conduct were expected of a nobleman in his dealings with equals; towards those who were socially his inferiors no such restrictions were considered necessary. Shakespeare's plays are a good instance to the point. In the 19th century affect-regulations were imposed upon everyone alike, and nothing is more significant than the way in which noblemen are depicted in books at that time. A heightening of the sense of guilt, shame, and fear in a democratic society brought about a growing self-consciousness, self-respect, and dignity among the members of the middle-classes. The 19th century was the most "rational" of all centuries in the modern age because it succeeded in repressing almost completely all irrational elements and motives in human life. And, furthermore, it did its best to convince people that there was a rational purpose, an ideology, behind each suppressed instinct. The rationalisation of human conduct and behaviour went hand in hand with a rationalisation of the human soul.<sup>1</sup>

Civilization was not made possible only through a gradual

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1. For a detailed discussion of all these problems see: N. Elias *Ueber den Process der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und Psychogenetische Untersuchungen.* ( *The Process of Civilization. Socio-genetic and Psycho-genetic studies.* ) Vol. I/II, Basel, 1939. And: Karl Mannheim: *Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge,* 1986.

purification of conduct and the rationalisation of social motives. Both of them are functions only of a general process of civilization and it would be futile to defend by means of "ideas" an evolution which in its very essence depended on social change and the resulting affect-regulations in the different classes and groups of society. Only after the various affects had been regulated a small number of gifted people formulated those ideas that stand for purification of conduct and rationalisation of behaviour. Prof. Whitehead in his *Adventures of Ideas* follows a similar line of thought without however emphasizing sufficiently the psycho-genetic aspect of the problem :

"When there is progress in the development of favourable order, we find conduct protected from relapse into brutalization, by the increasing agency of ideas *consciously entertained*."<sup>1</sup>

Ideas, in the psycho-genetic sense of the term, are the result of affect-regulations, and the intellectual phenomenon of scepticism shows already in its extreme form the tendency towards repression. If, for instance in religion, direct experience is no longer made available to the individual, he will first pass through a stage of scepticism repressing his wishes and desires for this direct experience, but will later on, in order to avoid the growing feeling of dissatisfaction and "unhappiness", take to some substitute or to some sublimation of this direct experience, which in the case of religion is called Belief. To write for instance a psycho-genetic history of religion would mean to show the origin and gradual evolution of "belief" among human beings. And most probably we shall find that the origin of belief is of a much more recent date than is commonly supposed ; when a direct experience of God was no longer possible and had to be repressed, that means towards the end of the Middle-ages, a slow sublimation of this experience took place which ended in the conviction that a prayer without "belief" will not fulfil its purpose. And it is only much later that "belief" came actually to stand for direct religious

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1. A. N. Whitehead : *Adventures of Ideas*, 1938. p. 81. ( *Italics are mine.* )

experience itself. Belief in this sense is again only a part and function of the process of civilization, of the rationalization of conduct and behaviour. It is again only among the savages and neurotics that we find a direct religious experience which is not based upon belief, but upon complete identification of the subject and the object.

Where does poetry stand in this process of civilization ? How does the poet adjust himself to the ever-changing restrictions upon direct experience and gratification ? If we follow the gradual evolution of modern poetry from the Middle-ages onwards, we shall very soon come across a dualism, a split, in the poet's personality which in our own time has become the most characteristic feature of artistic experience. Everything that has to remain hidden and secret is expressed in a veiled and sublimated form. If for instance we look at the literature and paintings of the Middle-ages, direct experiences of amazing plasticity will be found there. These poems and pictures do not represent the wish-fulfilments of day-dreaming, and all sense of shame seems to be absent from them. If in later centuries we find a similar representation of instinctual gratifications or direct experiences in both books and paintings, it will either be a kind of protest against the affect-regulations imposed on the lower classes by a decaying aristocracy, or a "sentimental" wish-fulfilment. It is no accident that the origin of sentimentality in both painting and poetry is to be found in a middle-class, struggling for recognition and idealising a "child of nature" or a "noble savage" that never existed except in their own day-dreams. In the same way lyrical poetry, in the best sense of the term, developed when the "gallant knight" of inferior social position first began to address poems to a socially superior lady, as we find it throughout the Middle-ages. His social position imposed upon him greater restrictions and affect-regulations in human relationships ; his craving could be expressed only in sublimated and "refined" form. A psycho-genetic study of lyricism would show how the growing interdependence among human beings

and the resulting absence of "pleasure", made this form of literature for a long time the most popular substitute for direct experience. It is indeed this refinement of affects, this transformation of direct pleasure into wish-fulfilment that the poet calls "love." In the same way, as long as the individual could experience Nature directly and not only through the medium of his senses, we shall find no "nature-poetry." It is only after nature had ceased to be either a fear-inspiring phenomenon or a matter of usefulness only, that the poet begins to "see" nature. And he is made to see it, because a large number of direct experiences and gratifications have been closed to him and the eye becomes the medium through which a certain amount of pleasure can be attained. A psycho-genetic investigation into the origins of our modern conception of "beauty" would show us a similar process as in the case of "belief", "love", and "nature." Aesthetic susceptibility arises in human beings whenever a direct experience of "beauty" is closed to them and when a sublimated experience takes the place of a direct gratification.

The 20th century has seen a gradual loosening of these affect-restrictions ; but this was mostly due to the effects of the last Great War. In all probability, however, an even stricter regulation of affects can be expected with the progress of civilization, the growing interdependence of human beings within the monopoly-formations of the modern state. Poetry, therefore, will have to be more and more allusive and symbolical, until self-expression will become the sterile reflection of a Freudian Unconscious, intelligible to no one but to the writers themselves. Poetry will become an essentially a-social occupation resembling more and more the aimless and purposeless playing of a child, the dissociated fantasy-creations of a neurotic individual, or the psychic identifications of a savage.

## C. F. ANDREWS AS A WRITER\*

Marjorie Sykes

TO THOSE who had the privilege of a personal friendship, however slight, with Charles Andrews, it will be the man himself, rather than his writings, that will remain most vividly in the memory. For them, to re-read his books will be to conjure up in the imagination the face of the man whose life and character finds in them a partial expression. But it is no exaggeration to say that there must be thousands, who never saw Andrews, who will remember him as the author of books, the reading of which has been in one way or another a turning point in their lives. In a newly published book, *India's Challenge to Christians*, Sjt. Cyril Modak tells how his own national consciousness was first roused by Andrews' pamphlet, *Indian Independence—the Immediate Need*. From another angle, the present writer had charge of correspondence coming to Santiniketan for Andrews during his last illness, and was impressed by the number of letters from complete strangers, who wrote to thank him for *The Inner Life*, and to ask for guidance in the spiritual quest upon which it had inspired them to embark.

No attempt will be made in this article to give an exhaustive account of Andrews' many writings. For any complete survey, a large part of his work would have to be dug laboriously out of the files of newspapers, journals and reviews in all quarters of the world, to which he was a constant contributor. But it is fortunately possible, by the use of readily accessible material, to arrive at an estimate of his work which may be enriched, but not seriously distorted, by further and more detailed study.

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\* The portrait in colour of Rabindranath Tagore done by Mr. C. F. Andrews which we have reproduced in the present number bears additional testimony to Mr. Andrews' versatility of talent. The original of the portrait, along with several other sketches, were presented by him to the Kalabhavana Museum, Santiniketan.—*Ed.*

Andrews' writings fall into several groups which while closely inter-related may here be considered separately. One of his very earliest published works was an essay entitled *Christianity and the Labour Conflict*, published over fortyfive years ago. The theme of this essay was expanded later into the booklet *Christ and Labour*, and once more maintained, with the fruits of a wider experience, in one of his most recent books, *Christ and Human Need*. Such books show that the title *Deenabandhu* conferred on him by Gandhiji in later years, was earned already in his early service to the poor of England. They also show that his sympathy was no mere emotional sentimentality, but was based on accurate historical scholarship and practical knowledge which command our intellectual respect. Andrews believed that the socialist revolt against the selfish individualism of the modern social order may learn much from the Christian social thinkers of the European middle ages, working as they did on the pre-Renaissance principle of community. These books, short as they are, are full of stimulus to the student, though they speak chiefly to Europe. It is significant of Andrews' fine sense of the organic nature of human life and history that when writing for Indians on a similar subject, he urges us to seek similar guidance from the social teachings of ancient and mediaeval India, and to beware of the crude attempt to transfer to our own soil the full-grown plant of a foreign-nurtured system.

A second group of writings are those concerned with political, social, and economic conditions in India and among Indians abroad. Some, such as *The Opium Evil in India* and *India and the Pacific*, with countless articles on South Africa and Kenya, reveal the same passionate campaigner for the poor and oppressed as is seen in the "labour" books. Others, such as *India and the Simon Report*, *India and Britain*, *The Problem of the North West Frontier*, are more directly political in the accepted sense of the word. Most of them are addressed to the conscience of the ordinary Britisher in Britain. An Englishman himself, a believer in the sincere good

intentions of his own people, he believed that if the facts of the Indian case were really made available in Britain, public opinion might once more rise to an act of unselfish generosity such as that which, in the teeth of vested interests, had abolished the West African slave trade. Andrews set himself in these books to the creation of that public opinion, with a disciplined fair-mindedness and a charm of presentation which it is difficult to praise too highly. Many of them are "dated", as we say nowadays; they were written in the urgency of an immediate problem—the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Simon Commission, the Government of India Act, the crisis of land tenure in Fiji, the evil influence of Miss Mayo's *Mother India* on Western opinion. Conditions have changed, new urgencies confront us, but the books are worth re-reading. On doing so recently, in preparation for this article, the feeling most constantly recurring to my mind has been that of a moral challenge. What has happened, in the intervening years to the tenants of Fiji, the opium addicts of Assam, the working mothers of Bombay, whose wrongs he cried from the housetops? Is all well *now*?—and if it is not, must not our own callous indifference carry part of the blame? No greater thing could be achieved by Andrews' books, nor one that would give him greater joy, than the awakening of other spirits to the same vigilance which he exercised on behalf of the weak and wronged.

A third group of writings are those concerned with the Christian devotional life. The first and last test of such work is its honesty of personal experience and conviction. "That which our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you". The authenticity of Andrews' work in this field is vouched for by its power to inspire and bless a multitude of readers. Books such as *Christ in the Silence*, *What Christ means to me*, *The Inner life*, *Christ and Prayer*, tell "with the humility and simplicity of a child" (to borrow one of his own phrases) the central secret of a consecrated life. They recur again and again to a few great themes—



God the Shepherd, the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, the "farewell chapters" of St. John's gospel, with their harmony of fellowship and service, and the quiet prayer of trust. They do not shrink from what for many is a hard thing, the sharing of intimate experiences of spiritual failure and struggle and peace in the hope that the record may help others. If that sharing was costly, it found its reward in the many letters which poured in to thank him for these very passages. Among such books individual idiosyncrasies will play a large part in determining our preferences : the writer has found *Christ in the Silence* and *Christ and Prayer* to be the most helpful of all. Nor do I think that a reader of another religious tradition would be repelled by any suggestion of exclusiveness in the Christ of these books, by any hint that he is trespassing into alien country. The Christ who was all in all to Charles Andrews was One whose spirit taught him a sensitive and understanding tenderness for other men's ideals.

Nothing was further from Charles Andrews' thought than any exercise of self-conscious art in his writings. He wrote because he had something to say, something which he felt it to be his inescapable duty to say to the best of his ability. That direct simplicity of purpose is reflected in his style ; it is a quality not to be despised : no external difficulty stands between the reader and his meaning. Nor is this merely a negative achievement : to express one's meaning in language which combines clarity of presentation with an emotional quality which is itself a part of the meaning, is to have the essence of good style. Some will perhaps criticise Andrews' writings for their frequent repetition in different contexts of the same story, the same illustration, the same argument or exposition. Andrews himself would have felt such criticism to be beside the mark. His aim was not to produce a polished and balanced piece of literature, but to convince and persuade, and he did not hesitate to use whatever he found most effective for conviction and persuasion, whether he had used it before or not.

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## PORTRAIT OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*By C. F. Andrews*



Nevertheless, this trained mind and sensitive heart was no stranger to the urge of a more specifically literary creation. A slender volume of poems, now out of print, and a few scattered verses published since, testify to this. It is difficult for anyone who stands in too close a personal relationship to him and to the sorrow of his loss, to attempt any objective evaluation of their literary merit. Some have a special appeal in their connection with crises in his life history of which he has told us elsewhere. There is, for example, the poem "*On Reading Gitanjali*", which carries our minds back to that moonlight scene on Hampstead Heath of which the poet himself speaks in his own tribute to Andrews in this number :

Soft as slow dropping waters in a Pool  
Kissed by the moon at midnight, deep and cool,  
Whose liquid sound upon the ear doth fall  
Fraught with enchantment brooding over all,  
Such was the spell which held my soul in fee  
Entranced on hearing first Gitanjali.

There is the record of his own inner experience of turmoil and calm in "*The Palms at Santiniketan*".

Tossed to and fro I had sorely striven,  
Seeking, and finding no release :  
Here, by the palm-trees, came God-given  
Utter ineffable boundless peace.

Finest of all, perhaps, is the description of mystical dream experience in "*Death the Revealer*", which one hesitates to mutilate by quoting in less than its full completeness.

One night there came to me a dream so rare  
That by its touch the veil of earth was rifted,  
All luminous and clear beyond compare  
Heaven's canopy was lifted.

Holy and calm the passion of that hour  
When love's full tide through every inlet flowing  
Flooded my life with unimagined power  
Infinite peace bestowing.

The veil rolled back and earth reclaimed her own  
And wings too frail to rise were downward driven,  
But I have seen His face—have seen and known  
This sacrament was given.

And I can wait the dawning of the day  
The daystar on my night already gleaming,  
The shadow and the veil shall pass away  
Death shall make true my dreaming.

A re-issue of these scattered verses in one volume, if it should prove possible, would be a tribute to a side of Andrews' work which is little known, and would be deeply appreciated by many of his friends.

## BIRTHDAY\*

Poor the poor man,  
caught in the storm of strident applause,  
enmeshed in the web  
of a thousand prying eyes.  
Give him a little nook amongst the happy obscure ones,  
oblivious of their birthdays.

The delirious crowd  
hedges around him like a wall,  
rudely isolating him  
from the nameless many.  
Fame like a clanging chain  
makes of him a prisoner.

Poor man, he is daubed with many colours  
and see, where he is held aloft  
on a brazen platform,  
where shameless fingers point at him  
day and night. . . .  
Poor man, he cannot take cover,  
he has nowhere to hide himself.

Why not let him alone  
in his own solitary world,  
where flickering light and sombre shade  
intermingle in endless patterns,  
where the eternal child lies frolicking  
in the vast stretch of sands ?

*Rabindranath Tagore*

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\* Translated from the original Bengali by Kshitij Roy

## RURAL ENGLAND\*

Rabindranath Tagore

ANDREWS arranged for our stay in the house of his friend—a clergyman who works in a village in Staffordshire.

It is August, high summer in England ; townsmen are longing to visit the countryside. People rush to parks and open fields,—whenever they can get a few more hours they go right out of town. Excursion trains are packed full, it is hard to find a seat. Joining the flock of flying townsmen we also got away.

Our host was waiting for us at the station in his open car ; it was cloudy when we arrived, it began raining as soon as we got a bit further.

When we reached the house, our hostess took us to the warm drawing room where a fire had been lit. The house was not an old parsonage but a new one ; the garden was also new, perhaps they had themselves raised it. Clusters of many-coloured flowers fringed the deep green lawn. Never had I seen such profusion, such freshness of flower and foliage as in an English Spring. It is unbelievable, unless one has seen it, how richly green and thick the carpet of grass can be.

The rooms of the house were neat and tidy, the library full of books on many subjects ; there was nowhere the least trace of negligence. Furniture, decoration, and comfort here are of a much higher standard than in our country ; every object is kept spotlessly clean with vigilant care. Slackness in anything would not be tolerated by these people.

In the late afternoon my host Mr. Outram took us on a walk ; the rain had stopped, but there was no gap in the clouds.

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\* Extracts from a letter written in 1918 when the Poet travelled in the English countryside with C. F. Andrews.

Translated from original Bengali by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty.

On all sides was the deep green of undulating meadows divided by low hedges. Though hilly, the landscape had nowhere the roughness of hills ; earth's exuberance was held in a beautiful harmony.

Mr. Outram met an acquaintance while walking and discussed some business with him. I learnt that a rural committee had been appointed for encouraging farmers to do some gardening of their own ; some days ago a competition had taken place and this stranger had got the first prize for flowers. Mr. Outram took me to the house of a few farm-holders. They had every one their kitchen and flower gardens round their cottages, and there was an atmosphere of homely toil leading to happiness and simplicity. After the whole day's labour in the fields they returned to their homes and then did gardening work in the evening. In this way they developed a bond of joyful companionship with trees and plants and this extra labour did not hurt them at all. Another good result was that such enthusiasm kept them away from drink. I had occasion to see many other proofs of the human comradely feeling, developed through service and welfare work, that existed between Mr. Outram and the village people who were under his care.

Institutional religion may occasionally hamper the progress of the people but in spite of it the spirit of religion works in this country and there is no doubt that the clergy have kept the inner standards fairly high in the life of the village people. In our country this was the work of the *Brahmins* but being based on *varna* the system led to inevitable neglect of individual responsibility. I do not believe that all clergymen have accepted the ideal of Christ in their lives, but they are not clergymen by birth, they have to be responsible to society. It would be difficult for them to allow their character or behaviour to be debased—so, if not anything else, they have on the whole held up the pursuit of pure character as an ideal of religion.

Whatever the scriptures might say, our society, in actual practice, has little shame in having religious ceremonies per-



formed by a characterless priest. This cannot but lead to the severance of religion from purity of conduct—we are tolerating a daily insult to our humanity. Society, here, will not easily tolerate a clergyman who breaks rules of religious behaviour ; even if he is not deeply religious, he has to be a man of character—in this way English society, generally speaking, is preserving a dignity of self-respect and undoubtedly getting its due reward.

The religious orders have arranged for a generalised provision of religion for the communities. But this is not enough—the great problems of humanity that present themselves to the country from time to time demand spiritual power and inspiration which institutionalism cannot provide. Such problems should be faced by clergymen with the inner music of Christ's own words in their hearts, by establishing Him in their lives. But how rarely this too happened . . . .

# DĀRĀ SHIKUH\*

Bikrama Jit Hasrat

## III

### DARA SHIKUH AND THE SAINTS

THE mystic interpretation of the religious life in sufism is chiefly expounded by its monastic orders and saints. These religious orders, an integral part of Islamic mysticism, so multiplied in Arabia, Turkey, Persia, India and other parts of the world where Islam had established its footing, that even after excluding an enormous number of heretic sects, their number exceeds seventy-two. But the chief sufi exponents of Islamic mysticism are divided into twelve prominent sects.<sup>49</sup> Every one of these has an excellent system and doctrine as regards both purgation (*mujāhidat*) and contemplation (*mushāhidat*). Although they differ from each other in devotional practices and ascetic disciplines, they agree in the fundamentals and derivatives of the religions of Unification (*Tawhīd*).<sup>50</sup> Surcharged with a deep sense of pantheistic thought and combined with devotional forms of asceticism, these religious orders of the saints have greatly influenced the mystic thought of the people. Sufism has done much to develop a distinctive philosophy of life in the mind, while the manifold monastic orders have carried that philosophic conception to the people and have applied it to their every day life. Al-

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\* For the first two sections, see the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* Vol. V. Parts III & IV.

49. Von Hammer in reference to the *tarīqs* or sufi orders says that the following existed before the foundation of the Ottoman Empire :—

( 1 ) Uwaisī ( 2 ) 'Ilwānī ( 3 ) Adhamī ( 4 ) Bustānī ( 5 ) Saqatī ( 6 ) Kādīrī ( 7 ) Rifa'ī ( 8 ) Suhrawardī ( 9 ) Kubrāwī ( 10 ) Shazlī ( 11 ) Maulvī and ( 12 ) Badāwī.

50. Al-Hujawirī's *Kashf-ul-mahjūb* : Gibb Memorial Edition ; No. XVII : p. 210.

though they embody the principle and foundation of mysticism, their distinctive feature is that the Knowledge of Divinity rests on saintship. This principle is affirmed by all, though the method of expression in the case of every individual order is different.

Dārā Shikuh's main interest in mysticism led him to believe that the natural spiritual instincts of man need spiritual leadership for guidance, provided by the religious orders. Sufism to him was a natural revolt of human mind against the cold formalism of ritualistic religion. To acquire its underlying philosophy and theology in its true perspective, the neophyte must select the right path. This could be achieved by taking the lead given by one of those sufi sects which have a close and fundamental affinity to the warm and mystical yearning after Truth and Union embodied in the *Tassawuf*.

In India some of these sufi orders came closely in the wake of Islam and brought with them a new mystic idealism. They came mostly from Persia and Turkey and stirred the minds of the people with devotion, fervour and spiritual influence. Working in a liberal spirit of co-operation with the Indian religious thought they started a kind of peaceful penetration into the Indian mind. Where the religious zeal of the bigoted Muslim conquerors had failed and had created a chaos in the social order and the religious organisations of the Hindus, these savants of sufism accomplished the task. Their mystic touch, enlightened piety and liberal outlook worked like a soothing balm on their wounded religious susceptibilities. They won the favour of Hindu and Muslim multitudes and some of them attracted the attention of the ruling Muslim monarchs and exerted powerful influence not only on their minds but also on the affairs of the state. The chief sufi order, which had a very strong hold on the minds of the Muslim emperors, was the Chīṣṭī sect, founded by Khwāja Abdul Ahamad Chīṣṭī ( d. 966 A. D. ) and introduced into India by Khwāja Mu'in-ud-Din Chīṣṭī ( d. 1236 A. D. ), who was very much favoured by Shāhab-ud-Din Ghauri. His tomb

at Ajmer is a centre of great attraction for both Hindus and Muslims. Akbar's devotion and veneration for the Chīṣṭī order can be gleaned through the pages of the *Ā'in-i-Akbari*.<sup>51</sup> The most prominent and revered saints of this order were Nizām-ud-Din Awliya ( d. 1325 A. D. ) better known by the title of Sultan of the Saints and Shaikh Salīm Chīṣṭī, who exerted a potent influence on the lives of the Mughal emperors and their Persianised Hindu court nobility. The Emperor Jahangir was born in the latter's house and the saint himself lies buried in an exquisitely beautiful tomb at Fatehpur Sikri near Agra.

The first phase of the spiritual life of Dārā Shikuh began with his formal initiation into the Kādirya order, which took place in the year 1049 A. H. He had inherited a long-standing adherence towards the Chīṣṭī order and *Khawāja* Mu'in-ud-Din Chīṣṭī, the patron-saint of the house of Akbar, but was soon won over by one of the foremost disciples of the Kādirī order, the renowned sufi Miān Mīr.

The Kādirī order, an ascetic sect of the sufis, entered into the religious life of Islam in about 1166 A. D., but it did not make its way into Indian soil until three hundred years later. Instituted by Shaikh Abdul Kādir al-Jilānī commonly known as the *Pir Dastgir*, it is one of the most popular religious orders among the *sunni* Mussalmans of Asia. He was born at Gilan, on the 1st. of Ramdhan in the year 471 A. H., and at the age of sixteen he came to Baghdad and studied Islamic theology, law and *fuqa* and thereafter became a teacher of a school of the *Hanbalite* law and a *ribat*. Dārā Shikuh remarks<sup>52</sup> that Shaikh Abdul Kādir practiced the *Hanbalite* law as is evident from his sermons collected in *al-Fath al-Rabbānī* ; but though the founder was the follower of Ahamad Hanbal, the membership to his community is by no means confined to that school and the order

51. Vide Blochmann Vol. II, or translated by Jarrett III, 857 ; also Khāfi Khan's *Muntakhab al-Lubāb*, Vol. II. p. 604.

52. *The Safinat-ul-Awliya*, opt. cit. fol.

is theoretically both tolerant and charitable.<sup>58</sup> Kādirism seems from an early period to have been developed on different lines according as Abdul Kādir was regarded as the founder of a system involving rites and practices or as a worker of miracles. In the latter direction, says D. S. Maroliouth,<sup>54</sup> it meant the deification of Abdul Kādir, the extremists holding that he was the Lord of Creation after God, absolutely, whereas the most moderates suppose that he was so only in his life.

The system of devotional mysticism, as formulated by Abdul Kādir and practiced by the Kādirites, though inconsistent with Islamic orthodoxy, is in fact the application of sufism to an orderly graded asceticism and its "materialization under the form of a cult of hidden subterranean powers".<sup>55</sup> It differs from other important religious orders mainly in ritual because of the evolution of its highly superstitious character, not only connected with its origin but to some of its later developments. It also lacks the homogeneity of rituals and practices, which mark the Chīṣṭī, the Suharwardi or the Nakshbandi orders.

The Kādiri order found its way into India in 1482 A. D., when Shaikh Bandgi Muhammad Ghawth, a renowned descendant of Abdul Kādir came to India and settled at Uch in Bahawalpur State. Muhammad Ghawth died in 1517 A. D. but his ardent followers carried the inspiring message of the order all over India. This sect became very popular in northern India, Punjab and Kashmir, where it found two of its most revered saintly followers—Miān Mir and Mullah Shah Badakhshani, who made it one of the most highly organised sufi sects in India. Miān Mir settled at Lahore and it was here that Dārā Shikuh made his acquaintance with him. In the *Safīnat-ul-Awliya*, Dārā Shikuh records<sup>56</sup> his first meeting with the saint, wherein he says that at the age of twenty-one, owing to a prolonged illness, his father Shah Jahan took him to the saint, who, by the magic

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58. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, No. 27. p. 609.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.* p. 610.

56. *Ibid.* fol. 66a.

touch of his supernatural powers, cured him completely in a week's time. Although glimpses of the close relation which existed between him and the saint can be found in this work, he has treated the life and teachings of the saint in his second work the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*.

The first category of his works, consisting of three mystic biographies, besides contemporary official records and semi-historical works, provide for us the most authentic and valuable data for the study of his relations with the living saints and his veneration for the different orders of the saints. The *Safīnat-ul-Awliya*, a biography of the saints and famous sufis, dealing with their lives and teachings from the advent of Islam till the author's own time, was completed, as the author himself says, "in my 25th year, on Ramdhan, 27, 1094 A. H." ( Jan. 21. 1640 A. D. ). It is divided into three sections, headed by an illuminating preface.

In the preface Dārā Shikuh gives an account of his reverence for the order of the saints and the circumstances which led to the compilation of the work. He says that he had cherished love and reverence for the sacred hierarchy of the saints and had a firm belief in the extraordinary powers they possessed and that he was one of the aspirants to reach their secluded circle. For this reason, he thought of compiling a work on their lives and teachings, because "if one cannot have the privilege and good fortune of their personal contact, he can at least take ecstatic pleasure by the knowledge of their good qualities."<sup>57</sup>

The necessity of a spiritual *pir* to guide along the Path is next emphasised. The great body of the saints, "by whose efforts and blessings, the world is permanently fixed", are the torch-bearers of Divine knowledge and in fact "God never leaves His people without saints to guide them."

"Therefore, next to the Prophets, there are no other persons than the saint nearer in the presence of God, the Almighty. No one is more com-

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57. *Ibid.* Introduction.

passionate and magnanimous, erudite and practical, humble and polite, heroic and charitable than the members of this hierarchy of the saints."<sup>58</sup>

At another place he appeals to our intellect rather than to our mind. He lays stress on the importance of the *pir-i-kamil* ( the perfect guide ).

"Whereas God has endowed man with the precious gift of reason and discrimination, He has created this universe to serve him ; therefore it is the duty of every one to seek Him ; for he who seeks, does ever find. He must go to a master in order to free himself from the pangs of separation and the worry of failure and loss. The communion with God is dependent upon the saints. He who has not found the Path has not found God ; he who has found the guide, has found the Path which leads to Him."<sup>59</sup>

In dealing with the saints of different religious sects, Dārā Shikuh classifies them according to the spiritual or miraculous power they wielded individually ; which shows their lack of homogeneity as a whole and a very loose connection between the local communities and their central institutions in Persia or elsewhere. According to his observations, the "sacred hierarchy" functions in different ways and its every individual member has a separate path of his own. Some are hidden, while others are manifest ; some perform miracles under the command of God, but performance of wonders is not their real object, while those who keep their existence concealed, sedulously try to conceal their supernatural powers. Some of the saints are commanded by God to work only under the direct inspiration of the Lord. There are others who follow the path of absolute renunciation and isolation and so long they work in this way their mind is free from worry and anxiety. Another class is engaged in worldly pursuits and the path which they follow is that of "to be in solitude in the midst of crowd, to be in retirement in the very midst of bustle and worldly noise." There is another class of saints who hang round the people of evil repute, their object in doing so is that men may not find them out.

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58. *Ibid.*

59. *Bisala Hak Numa*, p. 2.







Apart from this general classification of the lives of the saints noticed in the *Safinat-ul-Awliya*, they are divided into four sections in a strict chronological order. With a quick succession of cinematographic rapidity, the lives of four hundred and eleven saints are noticed in a comparatively short compass of two hundred and twenty-five pages. The first section opens with the Prophet, the four Caliphs, the three Amir-ul-Muminin and the eighteen Imams. The second section deals with the lives and teachings of the saints of five most important religious orders, viz., the Kādirī order, called Junaidi before the time of Shaikh Abdul Kādir Gilanī; the Nakshbandi, the Kubrawi, the Chīṣṭi and the Suhrwardi orders. It also deals with the saints of various other orders which have no connection with the above-mentioned sects. In all the lives of three hundred and eleven saints are noticed in this section. The third section contains notices on the lives of female saints under three sub-sections, viz., the Prophet's wives, the Prophet's daughters and other female saints. In the fourth section are given the life-sketches of the saints of minor orders.

At the end of the work is a short epilogue in which Dārā Shikuh gives the date of the compilation (1049 A. H.) and acknowledges his debt to the various standard works on the lives of the saints, especially the *Nafhat-ul-Uns* of Jāmī. He also mentions the fact that he belongs to the Kādirī cult and styles himself as "the servant of the saints, Dārā Shikuh, *Hanfi*, Kādirī, son of Shah Jahan." Here, as in the *Introduction*, he remarks that he had been studying the lives of the saints from all available sources; but the accounts therein given were meagre and their chronological correctness doubtful. So he took up the compilation of the present work, with a view to give for each saint information regarding his name, date of birth and other particulars scattered in various ancient and modern works. He had taken great pains in discovering many dates, which were not to be found in any other treatise such as the *Nafhat-ul-Uns*, the *Tarikh-i-Yāfiyī* and the *Tabakat-i-Sultānī*.

The main feature of these short biographical sketches is their simplicity in style and correctness of estimation. They are particularly valuable for a comparative strictness in the chronological order and the full dates they give. The compilation of such a work, in the days when scientific means of research and collection of materials was not an easy task, must have required great labour. The biographies are concise and brief without being vague.

The *Safinat-ul-Awliya* of Dārā Shikuh furnishes a considerable amount of auto-biographical material. Interesting subjective statements are an integral part of the work. These personal digressions are very common and throw much light upon the different episodes of his life. Here are some of them : his birth ( fol. 90.a ) ; his relations with Miān Mir ( fol. 66.a ) ; his extensive travels and his pilgrimage to the mausoleums of the saints : Shaikh Radi-ud-Din Ali's tomb ( fol. 104.a ) ; Hakim Sanā'i's tomb ( fol. 106a. ) ; Khwāja Bakhtiyār Kākī ( fol. 166.b ) ; Hamīd-ud-Din Nāgorī ( fol. 94b. ) ; Shaikh Nizām-ud-Dīn Awliya ( fol. 95.b ) and others ; his tribute to the Kādiri order ( fol. 118.a ) ; his love for the works of Jāmī ( fol. 143.b ) ; an account of his ancestors—Akbar and Jahangir ( 116. a. ) ; etc. etc.

### DARA SHIKUH AND SARMAD

VERY little attention has been paid by the historians to the relations of Dārā Shikuh with contemporary saints. It is a great tragedy of events that this most important aspect of the devotional life of the unfortunate prince has not only been ignored by the contemporary Muhammadan writers but even his most modern biographers. The records and documents which throw light on his spiritual relations with the living saints of the time, still remain untouched. The most important of these are, the *Fayyāḍ-ul-Kawānīn*, a collection of letters of Mughal princes which contains eight letters of Dārā Shikuh to Shāh Dilruba and Shah Muhibullah Allahbādi, asking for illumination on some of

the mystic doctrines; the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*, which includes about a dozen letters of the prince addressed to Mullah Shāh Badakhshāni and the *Mukālima Bābā Lal wa Dārā Shikuh*, a dialogue on comparative mythology, between the latter and a saint of the order of Kabir. To these we may add the circumstantial accounts of the contemporary historians, like the author of the *Mirāt-ul-Khayāl*, the *Riād-ul-Shu'ra* and the *Storia de Mogor*, which furnish details of his relations with Sarmad.

Sarmad, the famous sufi martyr of Delhi, according to the authors of the *Dabistān-i-Madhabīb* and the *Riād-ul-Shu'ra*, was originally an Armenian Jew converted to Islam. He was born at Kāshān and came to India in 1654 A.D. A man of culture and erudition, he was well versed in comparative religion and occult sciences. Devoid of the religious zeal born in a new convert, he was one of those liberal thinkers who boldly translated their convictions into action. His theosophist outlook is apparent from one of his quatrains, which is cited by Mirza Muhsin Fānī. "I obey the Kuran," says Sarmad, "I am a Hindu priest and a monk; I am a Rabbi Jew, I am an infidel and I am a Muslim."<sup>60</sup> Drunk with Divine love and ecstatic pleasure, he lost self-consciousness and turned a nudist. Soon afterwards he set on "wanderings" and came to Delhi, where his association with men of sufi thought gave a stimulus to his spiritual yearnings and he began to preach his heterodox sufi ideas. Here people flocked round him for his great sanctity and supernatural powers and he began to wield a potent influence over the religious mind of the people.

When Dārā Shikuh came to know of Sarmad, he brought to the notice of Shah Jahan the miraculous powers of the saint<sup>61</sup> and later on invited him to his court and, due to the mutual comprehension of similar mystic ideals, they soon developed great regard for each other. The author of the *Mirat-ul-Khayāl*,

60. *Islamic Culture*, October 1988, p. 669.

61. *J. R. A. S.* Vol. XX New Series, p. 120.

due to his convictions of the orthodox fold, describes this meeting in his own way. "As Sultan Dārā Shikuh had a liking for the company of lunatics," he remarks, "he kept Sarmad's company and enjoyed his discourses for a considerable time." Nicolo Manucci also cynically adds<sup>62</sup> that Dārā Shikuh liked a Hebrew atheist called Sarmad, who went always naked, except when he appeared in the presence of the prince, when he contented himself with a piece of cloth at his waist. Only Bernier's attitude towards Sarmad is sympathetic and the description of his execution is vivid and accurate.

There are accounts of very conflicting nature as to the reason of Sarmad's nudity, with regard to which we have no mind to enter into discussion, but it would be more appropriate to record here his own defence of living in *partibus naturalibus*,<sup>63</sup> which he advances in one of his exquisite quatrains :—

He who made thee rule this universe,  
Has endowed us with the cause of all distraught.  
Those with deformity, He has covered with dress ;  
To the immaculate He gave the robe of nudity.

Not much has come down to us concerning the nature of the discussions between Dārā Shikuh and Sarmad but it can be easily surmised that its main trend centred round some of the most intricate and controversial aspects of spiritual problems. Only one letter of Dārā Shikuh to Sarmad and the latter's reply has been preserved. Dārā Shikuh addresses him as "my guide and preceptor"<sup>64</sup> and writes :

"Every day I resolve to pay my respects to you. It remains unaccomplished. If 'I' be 'I', wherefore is my intention of no account ? If 'I' be not, where is my fault ? Though the assassination of Imam Husain was the will of God, who is Yazid between them ? If it is not the Divine

62. *Vide*, Storia de Mogor, Vol I. p. 884.

63. *J. R. A. S.* opt. cit.

64. *Indian Antiquary*, 1924.

Will, then what is the meaning of : '*God does whatever He wills, commands whatever He intends.*' The most excellent Prophet used to go to fight with the infidels and defeat was inflicted on the army of Islam. The exoteric scholars say it is discipline in resignation. For the perfect what discipline was necessary ?"

To which Sarmad replied with the following couplet :

"Dear friend,

Whatever we have read, we have forgotten,

Save the discourse of the Beloved which we reiterate."<sup>65</sup>

Sarmad's end was as tragic as that of Dārā Shikuh. Like the latter he was hated by the orthodox. He too was dubbed as a heretic and on the subterfuge of religious disbelief, the council of *ulemas* summoned by Aurangzeb passed an order for the execution of the "saint of insanity." It is also mentioned by some historians that Sarmad had predicted that Dārā Shikuh would succeed Shah Jahan to the Imperial throne of Delhi. When after the execution of Dārā Shikuh, he was brought before Aurangzeb ( 1661 A. D. ), who questioned him as to the validity of his statement, Sarmad replied, "God has given him eternal sovereignty and my prophecy has not proved false." According to Manucci,<sup>66</sup> he also sarcastically added, "But you cannot see him, for you tyrannise over those of your own blood ; and in order to usurp the kingdom, you took away the life of your brothers and committed other barbarities." This infuriated Aurangzeb and he ordered his immediate execution. But whatever may be the reasons for Sarmad's execution, one fact stands out clear. "Dārā Shikuh was condemned because of his 'apostacy', Sarmad too was condemned because he contributed partly to that 'apostasy'. Aurangzeb was a stern puritan. Deeply as he disliked his elder brother for his politics and his leanings towards the tenets of non-Muslims, his first act, as soon as he came to power, was to remove that arch-heretic and those who

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65. *Indian Antiquary*, opt. cit.

66. *Storia de Mogor*, Vol. I.

aided and abetted him in his apostacy and heretic notions.”<sup>67</sup> With the unusual courage of a martyr, Sarwad ascended the scaffold and when he saw the executioner raise a naked sword, he smiled and exclaimed :

The sweetheart, with the naked sword in hand, approaches near,  
In whatever garb thou mayst come, I recognise thee.<sup>68</sup>

It would be interesting to read the following letter of Dārā Shikuh which he wrote to Aurangzeb from his prison, just before his execution. It clearly repudiates the charges of the biased historians that in the villainous disguise of a mystic, Dārā Shikuh in reality was “a crafty intriguing politician.”

“My brother and my king, I think not of Sovereignty. I wish it may be auspicious to you and your descendants. The idea of my execution in your lofty mind is unnecessary. If I am allotted a residential place and one of my maids to attend to me, I would pray for your majesty from my peaceful corner.”

Aurangzeb disdainfully wrote this verse on the back of the letter and sent it back to him :

*“And you had disobeyed before and had been one of the seditious.”*<sup>69</sup>

( To be continued )

67. J. B. A. S. opt. cit.

68. *Ibid.*

69. *Vide Ruk'at-i'-Zlamgir*, Vol. I. p. 880.

# THE ETHICS OF HUNGER-STRIKE

Prof. P. B. Adhikari

HUNGER-STRIKE is a queer item in the order of the day. Fasting is being resorted to even for trivial causes. It has almost passed into a fashion in this country. Yet it is not a new practice which has appeared now. I am not speaking of its physiological necessity in certain conditions of health. It was resorted to, and is still practised, for religious purposes in many lands. Every living religion is found, more or less, to prescribe its observance, periodically or on certain special occasions, for its spiritual use. How this purpose is served by the practice is difficult to ascertain in all cases. But as a measure of self-discipline or control of the bodily life—the impulses and habits which serve that life, we can understand its motive and reason. It is even found to be enjoined as a final measure of self-control for the highest end of life among the Jaina ascetics of a certain sect to bring about, on determinate lines of slow practices, the ultimate cessation of “mundane” existence. Buddha is also said to have practised this sort of asceticism, to an excessive degree, for the attainment of calm concentration of mind (*yoga*) as a preparation for enlightenment. But he found in time the futility of this rigorous practice for the purpose and came back, fortunately for humanity, to the normal life of spiritual pursuits, and this change brought him finally to his beatitude. But it was not through fasting that he attained it.

Nevertheless, fasting on occasions may be said to have its use both for the physiological life and also in the pursuit of spiritual life. We can understand and appreciate its value there. But “Hunger-strike” is a thing of a totally different kind. It is resorted to with no such normal or high purpose. It used to be called *Prāyopavesana* in the old literature of this land. The only parallel that we can discover to the present



practice was prevalent under the name *dharana* ( colloquially *dharna* ( धर्ना ), or *dhanna* ( धन्ना ) mostly in the community of traders and money-lenders in this country. It was an "economic" measure with them, usually resorted to for the realisation of dues from obstinate defaulters. Mahatma Gandhi, as is well-known, gave a political turn to the old practice. Why he had recourse to this sort of queer measure for the removal of political grievances, it is difficult to say. It might have been due to a tradition current from old days in the community to which he belonged originally. He has no doubt ceased to belong to any community now : he is above all communities, and is now a great figure in the world of humanity. But traditions die hard, especially when they get a firm lodgement in the mind through heredity and social environment. In any case, Gandhiji has now declared himself definitely and strongly against the practice. He has realised its silliness as usually indulged in for any and every kind of cause.

But the ball is set going by his example, and it is difficult to stop it now. His followers have seen how their *Guru* has invariably attained success by the practice in his own case, and the *chelas* would not budge an inch from the path he has successfully followed hitherto. But these blind *chelas* would not care to understand that this success on the part of their "master" was not due to any mystic influence created by the determination "to fast unto death", but to the touching appeal it made by the noble cause he represents and his own high personality. The followers have nothing of the kind to count upon in their favour. They believe, perhaps subconsciously, that Mahatmaji must have a deep philosophy underlying the practice. This is no wonder, seeing how Mahatmaji has expressed himself at times on the subject. But his philosophy, if he has really one for the recourse, is partly mystic and partly politic. But what philosophy have his blind "imitators" to offer in justification of their action ? Either they believe in some "mystic" influence exercised by the practice, or, as it plainly appears in most cases,

they take advantage of the humanity of their fellow beings by simply "outraging" their heart. No wonder, therefore, that Mahatmaji has now discovered an underlying "violence" in such undertakings.

Now a few words about the logic of hunger-strike, if it has any, before we consider its moral value. What rational justification can there be for the measure in any case, is a question which is sure to arise. The only answer is, that there is none in the cases in which it is found to be adopted. We can understand the use of fasting for the sake of bodily health or as an exercise of self-control needed for the spiritual life. But what relation on earth is there between this quixotic measure and the cause for which it is resorted to in other cases? It is just like the wailing in loud cries of little children to get something they want. They succeed no doubt at times with their fond parents. But a constant repetition of the recourse brings in later a disregard or chastisement which cures the habit ultimately. But how to cure the growing present tendency, when it is a question of life and death, and the measure is deliberately adopted by adults otherwise sound in mind? We often hear them pleading that there was no other course to adopt in the situation, and they were helplessly led on to its adoption. But have they tried all other legitimate means before taking recourse to this foolish measure? Even if they have, what rational or moral ground can they offer for this outlandish method? True, the Press and the Platform often extol such stunts as "heroism." But is it really a heroic deed, if one courts suffering and death for any cause where there is no ground for the undertaking? A suicide would then be an act of the highest heroism in any case. This is rather a sort of insanity which happens to take possession of their mind at an impulsive moment, for which they must be lamenting later on in saner moments. There is a good deal of undetected insanity in the world, of which the present practice furnishes a good illustration.

Now of the moral aspect of the practice. I have stated

above that there is no direct natural or logical relation between hunger-strike and the cause for which it is found to be resorted to. If the measure "works" at all, it does so indirectly through the rousing of sympathetic hearts, which must suffer with others' sufferings. But what right have the self-made martyrs to cause this suffering to their fellow-men by recourse to a measure of personal suffering deliberately adopted? It is a cruelty to others as it is to their own selves. The question is also bound to arise, what right have they to sacrifice their own life by "fasting unto death?" It may be, their lives are saved ultimately through the intervention of sympathetic leaders. But you cannot always trust to this uncertain kind of rescue in all cases. And if the practice is allowed to go on unchecked, as it is found to be as an every-day affair, there is every likelihood of the hearts of men becoming callous in time.

There is a further aspect of the matter requiring serious consideration. Those who resort to the measure for the removal of their grievances, real or imaginary, forget that there is another side to the situation. This forgetfulness is found to be sometimes carried to a ludicrous extreme. Some time ago there was a report in the papers of a case of hunger-strike undertaken by a young man to get possession of his wife, whose parents would not send her on the ground that their son-in-law had no means to support her. We have had no news how the matter came to be settled ultimately. But it is unquestionable that the parents of the poor girl were perfectly in the right to refuse to send their daughter to her impecunious husband. But the young man was so much taken up with his fixed idea, that he would not care to give due consideration to the real point of the other party, however just and reasonable that might be. I am quoting this instance only to point out the extent to which the intolerant spirit of the hunger-strikers might be carried. It is doubtful if any sound advice or appeal against this mad practice would "work", unless a moral sanity prevails widely and the Press and the Platform cease to espouse the cause as warmly as they are found to do.

## REVIEWS

*THE LIFE DIVINE* : by Sri Aurobindo—Published by the  
Arya Publishing House, Calcutta.

It is not now for the first time that the great Yogi of Pondicherry gives out to the world the Philosophy of Life as he perceives it. He has been doing it assiduously for the last three decades in the pages of the now defunct publication, *Arya*, in various smaller volumes and in a large number of letters addressed to individual votaries. The present volume of over 450 pages, *The Life Divine*, is to be shortly followed by two others of about the same length. These tomes will largely cover ground already traversed by the Master, but several portions have been entirely re-written and the treatment of the whole subject is now more systematic, bringing to the reader in a compact form his conception of the Divine Life.

The duty we have undertaken is indeed an unenviable one. The interpretation in simple language of Sri Aurobindo's profound thoughts is a task which might daunt even a regular student of philosophy. We are so singularly lacking in scholarship and understanding that we can but rely on the ardent love and devotion that we feel towards the Master. Our ambition is to deserve his compassion by our sincere efforts.

The difficulty in our path is great. The very words "Life Divine" will probably provoke an incredulous smile in some. For, to them anything connected with Divinity is outside the region of logic and reason. One would have thought that in this century, when the most eminent exponents of physical science are knocking at the door of Infinity, the average intellectual would shed his old-world crudities and open out his mind for the reception of new ideas. But, unfortunately, the relics of bigotry still persist, and a few, at any rate, still proclaim in a strident voice that they would accept nothing which is not proved by the perception of their own senses. These apparently forget the necessity of employing adventitious aids such as telescopes and microscopes, barometers and galvanometers for their observation and experiment even in physical science. Yet what instruments can there be which would make the atoms, not to speak of electrons, perceptible to the senses ! Moreover, it is a matter of common knowledge that science has advanced as much by direct observation as by the formulation of hypotheses, which are but suppositions on avowedly insufficient evidence. Modern Astronomy, Biology and experimental Psychology have opened up a path of investigation which should familiarise the intellectual of today with

the subtle methodology of the ancient Masters. Besides, the intimate connection between abstruse mathematical concepts and the newest developments of Physics makes it abundantly clear that crude experimental methods cannot advance the cause of science very far.

We would therefore ask our readers to approach the book under review with an open mind and in a receptive mood. If experiments of a subtler kind have to be made to investigate subtler phenomena, we should not shirk our duty merely out of deference to prejudices inherited from a bygone age. Not that Sri Aurobindo insists on the acceptance of any dogma. On the contrary he asks his reader to pursue the theory of Evolution to its logical conclusion. Says he,

"The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious cooperation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God?"

How can we bid Nature to pause at a given stage of her evolution? The progress in manifestation must go on.

The second chapter of the book deals with the negation of the materialist. The Master takes his stand on the ancient dictum, "Verily, all is Brahman", and affirms that the physical universe is the external body of the Divine Being and is both real and existent. Life, mind and supermind in an ascending scale form the connecting link between Matter and Spirit. If we do not realise this we shall be ultimately led to deny either God or Nature. Sri Aurobindo denies neither and in the third chapter boldly tackles the ascetic view that the world of Matter is illusory and unreal. The outlook of the Western Materialist and the Indian Monist represent the two extremes and have led to diametrically opposite results.

"In India, if the result has been a great heaping up of the treasures of the Spirit,—or some of them,—it has also been a great bankruptcy of Life : in Europe, the fulness of riches and the triumphant mastery of this world's powers and possessions have progressed towards an equal bankruptcy in the things of the Spirit" ( p. 13 ).

"Therefore the time grows ripe and the tendency of the world moves towards a new and comprehensive affirmation in thought" ( p. 13 ).

This is the course of human evolution above referred to, the goal being "A new and rich self-fulfilment in an integral human existence for the individual and for the race."

Sri Aurobindo does not deny that both the ascetic and the materialistic outlook have been of immense value to humanity. When the real nucleus of truth got encrusted with an accretion of perverse superstitions and

irrational dogmas the ground had to be cleared for a new departure and a surer advance. Materialism has done this for humanity. In rejecting the outlook of the materialist we must take care that we do not throw away even one jot of its gains before we are able to summon higher perceptions and higher powers to our aid in lieu thereof. For, what the rationalist calls the Unknowable need not remain unknown for us, unless we deliberately choose the path of ignorance. The latest trend of Physical Science, Sri Aurobindo says, is highly significant of a freer future.

"Wireless telegraphy is Nature's exterior sign and pretext for a new orientation. The sensible physical means for the intermediate transmission of the physical force is removed; it is only preserved at the points of impulsion and reception. Eventually even these must disappear" (pp. 23, 24 ).

In the third chapter, the author shows how the ascetic's revolt of Spirit against Matter came to dominate Indian thought and how it has crippled Indian life for several centuries. No doubt, there have been attempts at adjustment from time to time, but all have lived in the "shadow of the great Refusal," till renunciation and abstention from Karma have become the keynote of Indian existence. Even the unlettered village minstrel has for centuries sung daily to his rustic audience of the unreality of the world and the futility of life. "The world is but a prison, a gilded cage. Run away from it, O my mind, to the abode of beauty and bliss." No wonder, there has been little incentive to action in the recent history of the land. But it must not be forgotten that the ascetic ideal has also rendered great service to humanity in the past—even greater service than the ideal of the materialist. In emerging out of it we must not rashly belittle this service. For, it is but an easy step from the discipline and submission of the ascetic to the ideal of selfless action enjoined on Arjun in the Geeta. We know of a notable instance of this in modern Indian History. The rise of Maratha nationalism under the inspiration of Ramdas and Sivaji was one of the most remarkable achievements in India in recent times. This rise was preceded by the persistent preaching of Bhakti and inaction by a long line of illustrious poet-saints from Jnanadeva to Tukaram. Said these saints, "There is dire misery, there is ruthless oppression, all round you. Do not lose heart. Trust in Vithoba, embrace his sacred lotus feet and forget the world." This teaching did not rouse the Maratha to action, but it taught him to discipline himself and taught him to submit to Vithoba's will. A new race of men was born who, when the time came, responded to the clarion call of Samarth Ramdas to selfless action, action for the nation, for humanity and for God. There was no more talk of the falsity of the world or the vanity

of human affairs. But an inspired people flocked in their thousands to the standard of their beloved king. It is said that the saintly mystic Tukaram had refused to initiate Sivaji into an ascetic life and had directed him to seek Guru Ramdas. Be that as it may, all that we have to realise is that selfless action is not as far removed from renunciation as some may think. Ramdas once called his great disciple Srimant Yogi or the Royal Ascetic and gave him the ascetic's ochre scarf for his standard. In the great Sivaji there was no denial either of Spirit or Matter, but a harmonious blending of the two, such as Sri Aurobindo foreshadows in his great book.

So many people who fancy themselves as men of action raise their eyebrows and ask of Aurobindo, "Why at this critical period of our history does this Yogi immure himself in his Asram at Pondicherry? Why does not he come out and work?" He himself gives the reply. Like the great Ramkrishna he says, "Brahma is true, but so is the world. I must have both. I cannot let either go." Like the Vaishnava poet, Chandidas, he cries, "Listen, O my brother Man! Man is truer than aught we know of. None can I place above Man." To call such a person a hermit and a dreamer is obviously erroneous. For, he has laid down his ideal clearly again and again. It is service of man in the truest sense that he cherishes, and it is to bring about the realisation of this ideal that he is concentrating all the power that he has acquired. For the establishment of a new order, a newer force has to be invoked, and for the dissipation of ignorance a newer light has to be let in. This force and this light can come only from the supreme source of all Shakti and Jyoti, Might and Light. And this source can be tapped only by him who can rise above his mind and body, who has secured access to the regions above those in which we live and function. This is the secret of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and this is the great quest in which he is engaged.

The fourth chapter deals with the Omnipresent Reality, the all-pervading spirit, and prepares the ground for a determination of the relationship between the individual and the universe. In the individual, the author explains, life and mind tend to act as agents of separation, as fomenters of disharmony, between Matter and Spirit, while in the cosmic consciousness there is no such tendency to discord. It is, on the contrary, "a meeting place where Matter becomes real to Spirit, Spirit becomes real to Matter," because on that plane the Mind illuminated by a knowledge that realises both Unity and Multiplicity becomes the agent of supreme union between God and Life. A comprehension comes of the truth that the Eka (one) and the Vahu (many) are essentially the same. The result of the Mind attaining Cosmic consciousness is thus summed up by the sage.

"In the light of this conception we can perceive the possibility of a divine life for a man in the world which will at once justify Science by disclosing a living sense and intelligent aim for the cosmic and the terrestrial evolution, and realise by the transfiguration of the human soul into the divine the great ideal dream of all high religions" ( p. 40 ).

Nor is there, explains Sri Aurobindo, any essential difference between the inactive Self, calm and silent, without connotation, of the ascetic Vedantim and the active, benevolent and the ever-vigilant father of the Bhakta devotee. They are the same Brahman in two aspects complementary to each other—the two sides, obverse and reverse, of the same coin. They appear incompatible only to the limited Mind. Man, when he has reached absolute calm, will easily perceive the harmony between the eternal passivity and the inexhaustible activity of the Brahman. True Monism recognises that everything all round us is Brahman, and does not seek to differentiate between the real self and a perpetual but unreal Maya. Says Ramdas Swami, "The unfortunate one, who looks askance at the Saguna because he thinks that he has realised the Nirguna, loses both the Saguna and the Nirguna."

With regard to the Sat and the Asat, the Being and the Non-being, the Upanishads seem to disagree. The Taittiriya says, "In the beginning all this was the Non-being. It was thence that the Being was born." Another rejects the birth of Being out of Non-being as an impossibility and says that Being can only be born from Being. Sri Aurobindo's view is that we cannot speak of things infinite in terms of time—"Sat and Asat, if they have both to be affirmed, must be conceived as if they obtained simultaneously. They permit each other, even though they refuse to mingle. Both ...are eternal."

For, Non-being is not nullity, nor is Cosmos a dream or a phantasm. "Phenomenon is not phantasm, phenomenon is the substantial form of a Truth." There can be no such thing as Maya, an independent entity, which originated and supports the world. It is the self in his totality which created the world and which pervades it. This is the Omnipresent Reality. Neither the Sat nor the Asat negates it.

In the next issue we shall try to set forth in simple language what we can understand of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy relating to the individual and his destiny, the individual and the universe, the mind and the supermind and other cognate subjects.

C. C. Dutt.



*CIVILISATION IN EAST AND WEST* : An Introduction to the  
study of human progress—by H. N. Spalding ( Oxford  
University Press : Humphrey Milford,  
London, 1839 )

HERE is a welcome volume, written with a deep insight and broad understanding, on the subject of human progress and the underlying spirit thereof, as illustrated historically among the different cultured races of the East and West. It is a work which treats, with a sympathetic attitude, of the struggles of humanity, on different lines of thought and practice, for the achievement of a goal conceived characteristically by different peoples from the varied levels of human nature and culture. In point of insight and understanding, the trend of treatment reminds one of that evinced by Count Keyserling in his *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*. Both have gone deeper into the real inner nature of the culture of a people overshadowed by existing practices which are not really and entirely expressive of the underlying spirit. How far the present author, like his German predecessor in the line, has succeeded in fully and adequately representing the true character of the different civilisations discussed in the book, is left to the judgment of the reader. The one impression which is likely to strike him is that a civilisation is too complex a thing to be easily brought under a special category as the author appears to have done in characterising the different civilisations he treats of. It may be admitted, however, that he has only attempted to classify the different types according to what he thinks to be their fundamental character, allowing variations in their actual complexity. These types, and the distinctive character of each, the author mentions in the Preface as *Biological, Material, Moral, Moral-Spiritual* and *Spiritual*. He calls them 'States', implying thereby the socio-political organisations which display predominantly the characters named. The first five sections of the book are devoted to the treatment of these types, describing the social tendencies of the people under each class, and the races which pre-eminently represent these tendencies, historical facts illustrating the tendencies and last of all the defects which mark each of these types. The whole treatment of these types is undertaken with an objective attitude and intellectual sympathy which characterises the writing throughout. It is particularly interesting to note the appreciative manner in which the author has tried to

bring out the real value of the Chinese culture of old as moulded by the teachings of Confucius and Mencius and raised to a higher spiritual level by Taoism and Buddhism. It may be questioned how far he truly presents the spirit of Chinese culture and its development under the latter influences. But it would not be an exaggeration to say that very few of Western Orientalists or Sinologists have hitherto approached the study of this ancient culture of the "heavenly land" with such sympathetic understanding as is displayed by the present author. With regard to trend of Indian culture which he considers as essentially "spiritual" he similarly displays a sympathetic insight which is rare in the writings of Western Indologists. But it appears that his treatment notwithstanding its value as far as it goes, is not so wide in scope as it was expected to be. He confines himself mainly to the tenets of the Vedanta of the school of Sankara and Ramanuja and the corresponding teachings of the *Bhagavat Gita*, referring occasionally to the relevant texts of some of the *Upanisads* in support of his position (barring its Mayavada). No doubt the Monism of Sankara Vedanta represents the highest culmination of intellectual and spiritual aspiration of Indian thought. But this can hardly be called as representative of all the different trends of spiritual life as practised widely in the land. There is no reference to the teachings of the other schools of Vedanta, and particularly to Vaisnavism and Saivism, which are still there as living faiths. Besides, there is very little said about the high spiritual ideas outside the strictly philosophical and vedic circles, which are current among the "illiterate" mass of the people. This is no doubt a regrettable omission. But this defect, if we call it so, could not possibly be avoided by the author who has based his views relying mainly on the available philosophical religious literature of the people. It is remarkable, however, that the author has, nevertheless, succeeded in grasping aright the general spirit of the religious culture of India even from the sources that were utilised by him.

The last two sections of the book are particularly interesting as affording a general review of the subject-matter of the previous sections in their implications leading to valuable suggestions with regard to the future goal of human civilisation. Here comes the actual treatment (especially in the last section) of the subject which he hints at in the preface in these words: "As each civilisation enlarges its reason and its interest it will come near to the rest, until finally we are united in a common knowledge and love of truth as a whole. When they are so, mankind will have reached its goal, it will be free to know, love, and enjoy the universe to the full."

How the approach to this goal can be speeded up in the present condition of humanity, is the subject of the last section where he makes

some valuable practical suggestions for a possible amelioration of the unhappy situation. This goal he calls "Kingdom of Heaven on Earth" using the familiar Christian name, and an approach to the ideal he calls "Renaissance" using also a well-known historical term. This Renaissance he brings under three types, characterising each both negatively and positively. The best type of them, which the present age needs, he calls "World-Renaissance", by which he means the establishment of a Universal Religion for Humanity as a whole on the basis of the aspirations which are found to be latent in man and towards the realisation of which the whole humanity strains itself. This Renaissance is to be constituted with the best of each type of culture hitherto historically presented in the different trends of civilisation. But it is not to be a mere synthetic mixture of the eclectic type, but a real unity in which the different elements are harmoniously combined. This way of stating an ideal is rather too abstract. It is difficult to envisage what this synthesis is to be like, although the author has not spared a lucid account of it in the last few pages of the section. The whole description impresses one as an intuitive vision of a poet or of a religious mystic. It is marked by a sanguine optimism as to this further goal which humanity is bound to attain ultimately when the present distracting tendencies, national or political, have had their ultimate inevitable failure. The book is thus meant to keep alive a too much cherished hope which humanity is going to lose in the disastrous situation in the world of today. It is difficult to say how far the book will succeed in serving this much-needed purpose. But there is no question about the value of a writing undertaken with such a broad spiritual view and anxious outlook about the future of humanity. In this respect, the present work may be regarded as a new approach to the subject, the importance of which is being realised in the day .

P. B. Adhikari.

# The Visva-Bharati Quarterly

Vol. VI, Part II, New Series

Aug.—Oct. 1940

## CONTENTS

The East in the West	C. F. Andrews	91
The Idealism of Sir Mohammad Iqbal	Dr. P. T. Raju	103
Sakuntala : Its Inner Meaning	Rabindranath Tagore	119
Persian Ethics	Prof. Hadi Hasan	127
Dārā Shikuh	Bikrama Jit Hasrat	133
My Boyhood Days	Rabindranath Tagore	147
Gandhiji on the State	Nirmal Kumar Bose	163
Surendranath Tagore	Rathindranath Tagore	173
Reviews		179

## ILLUSTRATIONS

A Painting in colour by Nandalal Bose	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A pencil sketch of Mahatma Gandhi by Ju Péon	<i>Facing page 166</i>
A Portrait of Surendranath Tagore by Atul Bose	<i>Facing page 174</i>



# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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August

*New Series, Vol. VI, Part II*

1940

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## THE EAST IN THE WEST\*

C. F. Andrews

### I

THE Greek mind, with one singular and hitherto unexplained exception, dwelt upon that which was perfect within limits rather than that which was beyond all limits.

The exception was Plato. He draws nearest of all among the Greeks to the mind of India. For he is never content merely with the earthly perfection which is visible and to be reached by human endeavour. He is ever seeking for that "heavenly city, which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

The essential Greek mind came back with a rebound in Aristotle, so sane, so balanced, so scientific, but always falling short of that idealism, to which Plato gave the very name we still use today. We might, without any incongruity, imagine Plato taking his abode among the forest dwellers of ancient India; declaring with them: "Listen to me, ye children of the Immortal, I have seen Him, the Infinite Personality, that is beyond Time and Place." But we can scarcely dream of Aristotle, the realist, dwelling for long in that atmosphere. Some passages in the

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\* We are glad to publish this article which was found among the author's papers. His own life was a noble and heroic experiment in realising the unity of man's spiritual experience in East and West, which he traces so learnedly in the above article.—*Ed.*

Greek dramatic poets breathe the same air as Plato, but it is not so marked in them as it is in Plato himself.

The age of Pericles, which was the crown of the Greek Period in human history, owed much of its distinction to this sense of finite proportion in human affairs. The lines of the architecture of the Parthenon have this proportion always in view. There is no leading architectural line soaring upward to the skies, like those in some of the greatest Hindu temples and in the Gothic cathedral spires. To take another sphere of art, where the Greeks equally excelled, the beauty of the Greek sculpture is in the contour of the perfect physical form of man and woman, realised in white marble without a flaw in the technique. The restraint of the treatment is so severe that there is little place for idealistic flights of the imagination, as in Hindu sculpture.

The same is true in other subjects. Drama, for instance, where once more the Greeks were able to produce a perfect vehicle of art, was controlled by the dramatic unities that strictly limited the field of action. The Muse of History again, to give one last example out of many, when she finds her highest exponent in Thucydides, not only creates a form which can never be surpassed, but eschews fable and legend with an exactness that would have satisfied the standards of modern science. Indeed, as we shall see later, modern science itself, with its realistic outlook upon life, is in a very true sense the greatest after-product of the Greek mind.

These wonderful children of antiquity, whose intellect had reached a clarity concerning the visible world which has rarely, if ever, been surpassed, shrank back from the infinite and the unlimited as though afraid to venture forward into the darkness. It is a very strange limitation ; and it surprises one in the Greeks, when one comes back to them after Indian studies.

Still stranger does it become, when one considers the character of Odysseus in the second great epic ascribed to Homer. He is the typical Greek, wise and many-thoughted, who has gone to the verge of the unknown. But here we find that even he

shrinks back. There are limits which in his daring adventure he may not cross. He stands at the head of the race, in the dawn of its history, both as an example of its astonishing temerity and its no less astonishing reticence, sanity and proportion.

Recent archæological researches have shown us against what a background of mad passion and insensate fear this sanity precariously stood forth in daily life. The art of Sophocles was created out of the raw material of the revels of the Dionysiac festival. It represented their sublimation rather than their repression. The *Bacchæ* of Euripides shows us for a moment that frenzy let loose. The object of the dramatist, as Aristotle finely described it in well-known words, was to cleanse the human mind through fear and pity. We can see the same restraint in the dramatic rule that the gruesome deed of murder should never be enacted on the stage.

This sane outlook of the Greeks saved them from gross superstitions. To the Greek mind at Athens, as the plays of Aristophanes show clearly, the older legends of the gods and goddesses had become objects of laughter and satire rather than belief. But there is a nemesis in human affairs, which always follows close upon the heels of finite perfection. The Greek genius was amazingly short-lived. It is true that its results persisted. But its achievements were crowded into one glorious century; and then the blossom faded. We have not been able again to reach that exquisite completeness which marked Athens at its prime; but in many other ways we have advanced far further and discovered things of which the Athenian intellect never even dreamt. Even our modern science in the hands of Eddington is going out far beyond the regions of the finite.

It would be true, perhaps, to suggest that Europe today, with its new world-problems of psychology, philosophy, and religion, which have to be dealt with one by one, has more to learn from ancient India than from ancient Greece. We may even venture to predict that the present century in Europe will draw its greatest sources of new knowledge from India and the East



in certain matters pertaining to the human mind. If this proves to be true, the reason will be, not that Greece is to be challenged afresh in her own sphere, but rather because, with the growth of the conception of human personality, and of the universe as pervaded by one divine spiritual life, we shall necessarily turn to other spheres.

If we look along the channels that flowed into the West and helped to form the reservoir of human thought in the ancient classical world of Europe, we shall find that this limited outlook of the Greeks was not confined to them alone. It is not necessary to dwell long upon the Roman mind, with its solidly practical, utilitarian account of the universe as a fit place to live in. That mind was obviously mundane, and the exceptions were very few indeed. A strange cross-fertilisation with the Stoicism of the Greeks produced some rare plants in this barren soil. Idealism in Marcus Aurelius is more pronounced than in any other ancient after the days of Plato. We note the exception, but it only proves the rule of the essential Roman limitation of spiritual vision and concentration on secular affairs.

We come to a more debatable area, when we consider the Jews, as they entered into the life of the Roman Empire. In spite of much in the Old Testament, which clearly passes into the unseen, we are learning afresh every day, as we examine more carefully the Jewish records, how limited, as in the case of Rome, their conceptions were. The great exceptions come here in the Prophets and the Psalms ; and these have formed the spiritual nourishment of the Christian Church.

## II

The strange volcanic upheaval caused by the Christian Revolution consisted in this, that it tore away from its foundations, with a shock of tremendous explosion, this "classical" life of man in the Mediterranean area. For the Christian Faith started out at once on its romantic career, uprooting, destroying and obliterating like an earthquake all boundaries which man had

reared up during the past ages in order to shut out the terrors of the unknown.

An emaciated form, writhing upon a gibbet, called a Cross, shocked the artistic sensibilities of the Greek world, just as the cry of unlimited forgiveness which came from His lips in death shattered all the legal ideas of righteousness among the Jews. "We preach Christ crucified," said St. Paul, "to the Jews, a stumbling-block ; to the Greeks, foolishness ; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man."

This was a Revolution indeed, in the midst of so much sane and settled life ! Into the Roman world of law and orderly security : into the Greek world of limited artistic perfection : into the Jewish world of justice based on exact requital, this strange portent came, with its transvaluation of all values and its unswerving gaze upon the infinite. "The things that are seen," said St. Paul, explaining the message, "are temporal : but the things that are unseen are eternal." This cry from the East had reached the West in many forms before ; but this time it came with the fulness of spiritual power. It is interesting to note that the only element in the classics of Greece and Rome which was to be entirely assimilated was Plato.

There can be little doubt as to where this new upheaval originated. It sprang from the East itself, where the unseen and the eternal had absorbed the souls of men for long ages past. Other Eastern cults had crossed the border and gained an entrance into the Mediterranean area. They had failed, but this succeeded. While it overleapt the classical limitations of the Greek, the Roman and the Jew, it soon proved itself to possess a higher wisdom of its own which was able to meet the needs of the age and win the acceptance in the end of its finest thinkers.

It had its roots in the Jewish religion and absorbed the teaching of the Psalms and Prophets. It was able, also, as I have suggested, to find in Plato's writings a *praeparatio evangelica*, and

it soon began to express its own ideas of the Infinite in Plato's language. Though the Roman Empire instinctively persecuted the new faith, fearing its rival strength, yet the Stoic outlook upon the universe which held the minds of the greatest Romans, was found to be singularly akin. It began, almost at once, to use the well-worn aphorisms of the Stoics just as it also used the sentences of Plato and the Hebrew Prophets.

At first, it hardly seemed likely that a new philosophy of religion would develop out of the experience of these early Christians. We have seen how profoundly un-Jewish that experience was, and also how un-Greek and un-Roman. The Christian doctrine of the Cross,—of suffering without limit and without retaliation,—was repugnant to classical antiquity. We have to go to the early Buddhist Scripture for such idealism of suffering and sacrifice, embodied in a whole society, and not merely in exceptional individuals. Therefore it had very little "atmosphere" at first in the West : it was a thing strange and outlandish. It seemed likely to follow the course of other Oriental mysteries, which had come westward.

But two remarkable writers at a very early date fulfilled this miracle of approximation,—St. Paul and St. John. They were able, through genius of the highest order, to link the primitive Christian thought, on the one hand to the passages in the Jewish scriptures which spoke of an infinite redeeming value in suffering itself, and on the other hand to the idealism of Plato and the Stoics. The crown of this new philosophy of life was reached in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel and in the conclusion of the same writer's Epistles, that "God is Love." Here is a point where religion and philosophy, ethics and metaphysics, meet.

If we go back for a brief moment to the spiritual thoughts of the East that were prevalent in religion outside the Mediterranean area before the birth of Christ, we shall find the conception of the Divine Nature, as ultimately "Love," developed slowly by human experience. It was faintly outlined in that

most precious age of religious thought, the Upanishad period, which had declared : *He manifests His immortal form as Joy*,—where the word “Joy” contains much of the higher conception of God’s nature. But it is in the early Buddhist and in the Jain doctrine of Ahimsa, that the teaching is made fruitful in practical life. The phrase, “The crown of all religion is Ahimsa,” is indeed a great landmark in the religious history of the human race. This doctrine of Ahimsa, to a remarkable degree, ran a parallel course to that conception of Love in Christianity, which “suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, thinketh no evil.” It has not yet reached its limits, as we can see in new religious movements in India today.

The sudden impact of the Christian Revolution on the West, which carried with it some of the atmosphere of Eastern mystical religion, resulted in a remarkable revival of Platonism under Porphyry and Plotinus at Alexandria. This Neo-Platonism, as it was called, was to affect profoundly the later history of human thought. It left a deep mark upon Christianity itself.

Before Neo-Platonism arose, the direct touch with India had been well-established by the Christian Church. Pantaenus and Origen, two of the Greek Fathers, had each of them obtained definite knowledge and experience about India. Pantaenus left the highest academic position in Alexandria to visit India in person. He brought back manuscripts and also records of Christians who had already settled there. This was before the end of the second century A. D. Therefore it is not unlikely that the Neo-Platonists, in their turn, were constantly in touch with the spiritual teaching of the East and drew largely from it in their mystical realigion.

A strangely pathetic and lonely figure, St. Augustine, closes this chapter of classical antiquity, as it yielded stubbornly but inevitably to the Christian Faith. Torn by repentance and doubt, exalted by hope and faith and love, himself one of the tenderest souls that ever breathed, standing out above the wreckage of the classical age, he gave to the West, more than any

other single man, those central terms of its new religious philosophy which still remain paramount in the modern age. In his search after God, he sought also to fathom the infinite depths of human personality and to find there a true reflection of the divine. In this ardent mystical quest, by a singularly different route, but all the while aiming to reach the same goal, he comes nearest of all to Plotinus.

This intuitive vision of the Infinite carries us on the one hand back to the profound thinkers of the East and, on the other, forward to much of the new psychology of our modern age. His ardent and passionate longing for the presence of God in the soul, which could never be satisfied with the perfection of this present world, shows us how far we have travelled from the antique classical finite aim of the Greeks and Romans. He stands at the portal of those realms of Christian romance, which were the dream of the Middle Ages—those “Ages of Faith” in Europe, wherein myth and legend made up the daily life and experience of vast masses of mankind, and the solid earth, with its attractions of the flesh, was abandoned by those who were in the search for the Holy Grail and the Divine Bliss.

### III

Following out, very rapidly indeed, the course of these Ages of Faith, as they affect our present subject, we find how, in the midst of much that was formal and crude and literal and coarse in spiritual texture, there were in every generation tender and refined souls who sought to follow St. Augustine along the mystical way, and to sound the depths of the human spirit in its search for God, approaching with awe and wonder the infinite ideal. They climbed painfully but triumphantly the ascent which they learnt to call the *Scala Perfectionis*,—the steep pathway of the soul, which led to the Beatific Vision. The “purgation” with which it began led on to “illumination”, and lastly to “Union” in which it found its goal.

Their search for inward truth led them also, like St. Augus-

tine, to enter the inner depths of their own personality and to seek out the soul's direct relation to the universe and God. Benedict, Bernard, Abelard, Francis, Dante, Thomas a Kempis, each of these in varying degree and mode represents this passionate search for infinite truth. Not seldom they neglect and despise the intellectual light altogether and fail to realise its vital purpose as a true guide to the soul. But deep down in the consciousness of man a new range of human thought was being explored. We, in this modern age, are now seeking to gather in the treasure, which they have left behind. When we compare it with the mysticism of the East, we discover a new kinship. It is perhaps the age when the West most nearly approached the East in the realm of spiritual thought.

Amid all this that was pointing to higher regions of the Spirit yet unreachd, there was another side in these Middle Ages of Europe which led to a reaction : for there was a flaw at the base of Christianity itself as conceived in the West. The romantic element in the Christian Faith, as we have seen, could not arrive at any compromise with the ancient classical world.

The artistic proportion of the Greeks, which had given an external unity to matter and spirit, soul and form, broke up before the new intensive moral idealism of the Christian Faith, that knew no limit to the powers of sacrifice and devotion and counted all the world as dross that it might win Christ. At the same time, this Christian ideal itself went to excess and extravagance. It raised more difficulties than it could by its own power resolve. Deep down, in its very inmost structure, as we see from St. Paul's Epistles, there was a perpetual conflict between matter and spirit, unresolved and seemingly unresolvable, a dualism that was profound. Throughout the Middle Ages, this war between the soul and the flesh was carried on with an unrelenting zeal. It gave rise to dogmas which made havoc of sane thinking, and led to abnormalities and excesses which rendered impossible the healthy intellectual growth of mankind.

## IV

The thinking mind of Europe could, in the end, no longer bear the strain of this fantastic idealism ; this perpetual other-worldly outlook which never reached the truth. It swung back, on the full tide of the Classical Renaissance, to the frank acceptance of the mundane standard of values, and of the finite Classical conception of virtue, as engaged only with the present earthly existence. The romantic element was freely thrown aside. Men determined to obey priests and popes no longer. They prepared to live in the present, enjoy the present, and be pagan in their outlook once more. Even cardinals and popes themselves joined in the reaction, when it reached its highest flood-point, sweeping away all the great landmarks of the Middle Ages in Church and State alike.

In one sense, the Modern Age of Europe has meant a return to realism and a weakening of the idealist outlook upon life. The earlier discoveries of modern science have been made by the concentration of the human mind upon reason and experiment, and the abandonment of the pathway of direct intuition as a source of knowledge. Thus, in more sense than one, a revival of the classics has taken place. In all this process, the West has drifted further and further away from its spiritual basis in the unseen.

Yet even in the West, the romantic element had not been altogether left behind during the Age of Reason which followed the Classical Renaissance. In the Eighteenth Century, it gave birth to the enthusiastic movement known as the Evangelical Revival, which brought into the homes of the poorest a mystical faith, transforming and purifying in its effects. George Fox and the Society of Friends represented another range of mystical religious thought and life. In Germany, also, there dawned a new illumination, that eagerly availed itself of every ray of light from the East, and began once more to follow the pathway of intuition as a means to attain truth. Philosophy, with due reverence,

was set up boldly on its throne and renewed search into unexplored regions of the human mind brought fresh facts and experiences to light.

In the Nineteenth Century the Modern Age of Science began. The Christian Church, which had bound itself hard and fast with irrational dogmas and creeds, could not at first cut itself loose, and make the fearless appeal to every faculty of man to join in the search for truth. A fatal conflict went on, all through the Century, between intellect and faith. Science became more and more abstracted from religion, and philosophy took the same precipitous course. While great gains have been achieved in certain directions by such abstractions, great losses have also ensued. The wholeness of life has been lost sight of, and humanity itself has been divided into compartments.

In Europe, the conception of the universe governed by the postulates of science, has tended to become rather that of an infinite series and a never-ceasing flux, than that of a spiritual ideal being realised under conditions of space and time. The imagination of the modern man is taught by science to picture the crash of systems and the wreck of worlds in an endless sequence. The infinitely great and the infinitely small in nature have been revealed to man's gaze as never before, but the mind and the spirit find no rest in all these bewildering discoveries. Modern minds frequently retire from them, jaded and worn, to the limited ideal of ancient Greece, and say : "Let us leave the infinite alone ; it can never be fathomed. Let us perfect that which we know and beautify the world in which we live."

The new age still gropes for that spiritual vision of the Infinite which is satisfying, not terrifying and morbid ; that vision which alone can unify the world. But as yet there has not been fashioned in the West any philosophy comprehensive enough to meet the true demands of religion and science alike, and bring a new unity to mankind.

In the present turmoil and confusion in Europe after the Great War, which has shaken the confidence and pride of the



West, there are very many earnest souls who are looking more and more wistfully to the East. They seek to discover whether the harmony between religion and science on the one hand and science and philosophy on the other, may not be found by taking into account that eastern hemisphere which has hitherto been for the most part outside the field of European research.

One thing is practically certain. The old isolation of the different cultures and religions of the world, which was originally in a great measure geographical, is now rapidly vanishing. The different currents of thought and life among the races of mankind have to be made to flow into one another in the future. Channels of intercommunication must be cut. The romantic and idealistic element, which is still strong in the religions of the East, must be brought into closer contact with the classical and realistic element, which came back to modern Europe with the Renaissance and has dominated European thought ever since. Only thus can the spiritual conception of the Universe, which is innate in the consciousness of mankind, in East and West alike, find its true setting and its full expression.

## THE IDEALISM OF SIR MOHAMMED IQBAL\*

Dr. P. T. Raju, Ph.D., Sastri.

SIR Mohammed Iqbal is better known as a poet than as a philosopher. But still he has given us a philosophy in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, *The Secrets of the Self*, and in some articles, in all of which he has shown himself to be a forceful thinker. Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah calls him the most celebrated modern thinker of Islam. And though he addresses his thoughts only to the Muslims, they could as well have been addressed to all, including the Hindus and the Christians. He was for a long time popular with the Hindus as well, but later his religious enthusiasm became communal and he began preaching the *Jihad* or the holy war against the unbelievers. But for that fact his philosophy would have had a wider and better appeal, and he would have been a potent force for unifying the two major communities of India. However, whatever be his communal views, his philosophical ideas are not without interest.

Though much influenced by Rumi, Arabi and other Sufis, he does not believe that Islam ever preached the complete annihilation of self in God. The ego as a finite centre of experience is not false ; it is the fundamental fact of the universe.<sup>1</sup> Iqbal's sympathies are more with McTaggart than with Bosanquet. Yet the universe is not a finished whole. It is not yet a complete truth. It is ever advancing. After Bergson Iqbal conceives reality as pure duration. "A critical interpretation of the sequence of time as revealed in ourselves has led us to a notion of the ultimate Reality as pure duration in which thought, life and purpose interpenetrate to form an organic unity. We cannot conceive this unity except as a unity of the self—an all-embracing concrete

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\* Extract from the author's *Idealistic Thought of India* ( to be published ).

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. XVII. Eng. Tr. by R. A. Nicholson.

self—the ultimate source of all our individual life and thought.”<sup>1</sup> Now time, Iqbal tells us, is an essential element in the ultimate Reality.<sup>2</sup> He therefore disagrees with McTaggart who maintains the unreality of time. “But the real time is not serial time to which the distinction of past, present and future is essential; it is pure duration, i.e., change without succession, which McTaggart’s argument does not touch.”<sup>3</sup> So far Iqbal is at one with Bergson. But he does not accept Bergson’s strictures against thought. The latter conceived thought as a spatializing activity and as opposed to intuition, which only can reveal the true nature of reality. Iqbal maintains that though outwardly thought spatialises and makes use of only mechanical categories, it has a deeper moment also in which it synthesizes the elements of our experience and goes beyond mechanism. Iqbal criticises both Gazali and Kant also for failing “to see that thought, in every act of knowledge, passed beyond its own finitude.”<sup>4</sup>

Iqbal is anxious to prove that man should not abandon the world in order to realise the ultimate truth. If, as it is thought, thought is connected with the world, and if the world has to be renounced for the ultimate truth, it implies that thought has to be left back. And it is held that intuition alone and not thought can reveal to us the final truth. But Iqbal wants to show that neither the world nor thought should be left back. It was a mistake of Gazali, Kant, Bergson and a host of others that they have not noticed a deeper aspect of thought. “In its deeper movement, however, thought is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in whose self-unfolding movement the variously finite concepts are merely moments. In its essential nature, then, thought is not static; it is dynamic and unfolds its internal infinitude in time like the seed which, from the very beginning, carries within the organic unity of the tree as a fact. Thought

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1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 76.

2. *Ibid*, p. 77.

3. *Ibid*, p. 79.

4. *Ibid*, p. 8.

is therefore the whole in its dynamic self-expression, appearing to the temporal vision as a series of definite specifications which cannot be understood except by reciprocal reference. This meaning lies not in their self-identity, but in the larger whole of which they are the specific aspects. The larger whole is, to use a Quranic metaphor, a kind of 'Preserved Tablet,' which holds up the entire undetermined possibilities of knowing as a present reality, revealing itself in serial time as a succession of finite concepts appearing to reach a unity which is already present in them."<sup>1</sup>

Iqbal tells us that our self has two aspects, the external and the internal, which he calls the efficient and the appreciative. In its first aspect it enters into relations with the things of space. It is what the psychologist generally studies and can be interpreted in terms of the laws of association. But it is in its internal aspect that we get the clue to an understanding of reality. "It is only in the moments of profound meditation, when the efficient self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner centre of experience. In this life process of the deeper ego the states of consciousness melt into each other. The unity of the appreciative ego is like the unity of the germ in which the experiences of its individual ancestors exist, not as a plurality, but as a unity in which every experience permeates the whole. There is no numerical distinctness of states in the totality of the ego, the multiplicity of whose elements is, unlike that of the efficient self, wholly qualitative. There is change and movement, but this change and movement are indivisible; their elements interpenetrate and are wholly non-serial in character. It appears that the time of the appreciative self is a single 'now' which the efficient self, in its traffic with the world of space, pulverises into a series of 'nows' like the pearl beads in a thread. Here is, then, pure duration unadulterated by space."<sup>2</sup>

To sum up the position so far reached. Reality is pure

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1. *Op. Cit.*

2. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 65.

duration. In it time is an element ; but time as it is Reality is not serial time ; it is change without succession. The elements in it interpenetrate and fuse into each other, so that we cannot make the distinction between past, present and future. It is one eternal now. The consciousness that can reveal to us the nature of this reality, which Bergson calls intuition and which as creative is will also, and which Kant, Gazali and others regard as beyond thought, is not opposed to thought. It is thought itself in its deeper aspect. Iqbal is not unaware of the fact that thought which is used in our ordinary practical life is mechanistic and that as such it cannot reveal to us Reality in its purity. That is why he says at another place<sup>1</sup> that lying close to our normal consciousness there are potential types of consciousness which can "open up the possibilities of life-giving and knowledge-yielding experience." But this deeper consciousness is not opposed to thought ; it is thought in its synthetic activity by which the manifold fuses into one and serial time becomes pure duration and an eternal 'now'. This truth is given in religious experience. The pure duration does not exclude the manifold of thought and so religion does not require a negative attitude towards the world. Reality is our self in our deeper aspect and so our ego is not annihilated in Reality.

It is obvious that Iqbal ingeniously connects the idea of pure duration borrowed from Bergson with that of the eternal present of Royce and others. Speaking of the divine time he says that it is what the "Quran describes as the 'Mother of Books' in which the whole of history freed from the net of causal sequence, is gathered up in a super-eternal 'now'".<sup>2</sup> "Knowledge, in the sense of discursive knowledge, however infinite, cannot, therefore, be predicated of an ego who knows, and at the same time forms the ground of the object known. Unfortunately, language does not help us here. We possess no word to express the kind of knowledge which is also creative of its object.

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1. "Is Religion Possible ?" Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1932-3.

2. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 105.

( Evidently Iqbal somehow missed here Kant's conception of the intuitive understanding. ) The alternative concept of divine knowledge is omniscience in the sense of a single indivisible act of perception which makes God immediately aware of the entire sweep of history, regarded as an order of specific events, in an eternal 'now'. This is how Jalaluddin Dawani, Iraqi and Professor Royce in our own time conceived God's knowledge. There is an element of truth in this conception. But it suggests a closed universe, a fixed futurity, a predetermined unalterable order of specific events which, like a superior fate, has once for all determined the direction of God's creative activity."<sup>1</sup> That is, even to call the divine time an eternal Now is misleading. For the idea suggests a closed universe in which past, present and future are once for all determined. But reality is pure duration and full of infinite possibilities. So the idea of creativity should be added to that of the eternal present.

This creativity is always a forward movement which never turns back. On this point Iqbal differs from Nietzsche, who advocates Eternal Recurrence. Iqbal maintains that this recurrence is one form of mechanism and determinism and is opposed to free creativity. Recurrence means that the events of one cycle recur in the succeeding ones and this means that the future is once for all determined. There can be creativity only when things are not previously determined. Nietzsche's view is "nothing more than Fatalism worse than the one summed up in the word 'Qismat' ".<sup>2</sup>

The final reality therefore is an ego ; it has to be understood as an ego. "Only that is, strictly speaking, real which is directly conscious of its own reality."<sup>3</sup> And "on the analogy of our conscious experience, then, the universe is a free creative movement."<sup>4</sup> But then what are the things created by the ego ?

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 108.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

It is only egos that can proceed from an Ego. The Ultimate Ego functions as ego-unities or ego-centres. "The world in all its details, from the mechanical movement of what we call an atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego, is the self-revelation of the 'Great I am'. Every atom of Divine Energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego. But there are degrees in the expression of ego-hood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of ego-hood until it reaches its perfection in man".<sup>1</sup> Like Leibnitz and McTaggart, Iqbal believes that the world is through and through spiritual and consists of only selves. But we should note that these egos, according to Iqbal, proceed from God and had a beginning in time,<sup>2</sup> and therefore God is given a far higher status by him than what He could get from the hands of Leibnitz and McTaggart.

Evidently Iqbal believes in grades or degrees of reality. The true nature of reality is ego-hood. But we should not say that this ego-nature is as manifest in a particle of dust as in a worm, as manifest in a worm as in man, and we may add, as manifest in man as in God. The true ego, for Iqbal, is our deeper self and man cannot be always conscious of it but only in deep meditation. Probably even then we do not go deep enough. However, there are grades of obscurity and clarity of this ego-hood and, if consciousness is the distinguishing mark of reality, there are degrees of reality. Material nature must be a sort of appearance.

Iqbal writes: "Now a self is unthinkable without a character, i. e., a uniform mode of behaviour. Nature, as we have seen, is not a mass of pure materiality occupying a void. It is a structure of events, a systematic mode of behaviour, and as such organic to the ultimate Self. Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self. In the picturesque phrase of

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1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 99.

2. *Ibid*, p. 162.

Quoran, it is the habit of Allah. From the human point of view it is an interpretation which, in our present situation, we put on the creative activity of the Absolute Ego. At a particular moment in its forward movement it is finite ; but since the self to which it is organic is creative, it is liable to increase, and is consequently boundless in the sense that no limit to its expression is final. Its boundlessness is potential, not actual.”<sup>1</sup> Reality is a creative forward movement and matter is the form of its activity. Because reality touches the serial time always only at one point, at that particular moment matter appears finite. But as matter is an aspect of the creative moment, it too is infinite like the latter and is ever increasing because advancing. But this does not mean that matter would become infinite in some future moment. Its infinity lies in its potentiality ; its infinity can never be actual.

There is therefore no duality of mind and matter in Iqbal’s philosophy. “What then is matter ? A colony of egos of a low order out of which emerge finite life and consciousness of a higher order, when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of complexity.”<sup>2</sup> And similarly is the relation between body and mind interpreted. Iqbal accepts neither parallelism nor interactionism. “The system of experiences we call soul or ego is also a system of acts. This does not obliterate the distinction of soul and body ; it only brings them closer to each other. The characteristic of the ego is spontaneity ; the acts composing the body repeat themselves.”<sup>3</sup> That is, the soul or ego is creativity itself ; it is simply an onward movement. But this movement has a pattern or habit according to which the acts repeat themselves. And this is the body. So really there is no difference between soul and body, or mind and matter. Does not the Saiva Advaita maintain that the world is the energy of the Absolute ? Do not many other Vedantic systems hold a

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 76-7.

2. *Ibid*, p. 147

3. *Ibid*, p. 146.



similar view ? So matter is not different from spirit ; and, it could have been added, it should not be, and cannot be shunned. "The truth, however, is that matter is spirit in space-time reference. The unity called man is body when we look at it as acting in regard to what we call the external world ; it is mind or soul when we look at it as acting in regard to the ultimate aim and ideal of such acting."<sup>1</sup>

Though the whole world is composed of spirits and proceeds out of the Ultimate Spirit, Iqbal is opposed to pantheism. When reality is described as self-revealing and the metaphor of light is applied to God, Iqbal tells us that it should "be taken to suggest the Absoluteness of God and not his omnipresence which easily lends itself to pantheistic interpretation."<sup>2</sup> God is not infinite in the sense of spatial infinity. His infinity consists of the "infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity of which the universe, as known to us, is only a partial expression."<sup>3</sup> But at the same time Iqbal maintains that the universe is no other to God, and that God and the universe are "only intellectual modes of apprehending the life of God."<sup>4</sup> But this means that the universe is part and parcel of God. And pantheism must mean, according to Iqbal, the theory for which God is absolutely immanent in the world and is exhausted in it. But even in Hindu philosophy there is not a single school which believes in such pantheism. Even the *Bhagavadgita* asserts that the world forms only a part of God,<sup>5</sup> an idea which is borrowed from the Upanishads. And the infinity of God is not understood spatially, though his presence must be felt at every point of space. However, if there is really no difference between God and the world and the two are only two different modes of apprehending the same thing, is not God all-pervasive and so

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 216.

2. *Ibid*, p. 89.

3. *Ibid*, p. 90.

4. *Ibid*, p. 91.

5. X, 42. *Viśvabhyūhamidam kṛtsnam ekāmsena sthito jagat*. See the commentaries also.

omniscient ? Besides, if God can hold everything in an eternal Now, can anything be beyond his knowledge ? These ideas do not seem to have been reconciled by Iqbal. In his anxiety to avoid pantheism, he has overlooked their irreconcilability. It is not necessary to deprive God of his omniscience in order to avoid pantheism. Just as the eternal Now need not imply a block universe and absolute determinism, omniscience too need not imply them. Otherwise, for the same reason for which omniscience has to be given up the doctrine of the eternal present also has to be given up.

Iqbal believes in a sort of meliorism but with the certainty of the victory of man over evil.<sup>1</sup> The final victory cannot be achieved for man by somebody else ; he has himself to work for it. But he may be sure of success for the obvious reason that everything proceeds from God and the world is only a mode of his behaviour. This meliorism evidently differs from that of James for whom there is continual struggle between the forces of good and evil and God is not omnipotent and infinite. He therefore really depends on our help for subduing the forces of evil. But the help which human beings render in Iqbal's philosophy is not to a finite God but to one who is infinite and omnipotent and therefore is not pitched against forces as eternal and powerful as himself. The so-called evil forces are not really a second to him, for the world consists of nothing but egos which proceed from him. There is nothing alien to him in the world, and evil therefore must be unreal or an appearance for Iqbal. Iqbal does not discuss the point in detail and it would not be fair to attribute to him views not actually held by him. But we may say that here is a problem not completely solved.

If God is the central reality and all the egos that constitute the world originate in him and therefore have to go back to him, where does meliorism come in ? If success is sure, provided we try, why not be optimistic instead of being merely melioristic ?

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1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 118.

Iqbal's idea may be that even this world of which evil is a necessary factor may be bettered if human egos strive for it. If this is his view some new problems crop up. There are many in Europe who hold such a view. Tennyson believed in a far off divine event, which would of course be an event in serial time. Of late Samuel Alexander believed that the world would evolve the Deity itself. Iqbal's view may not be exactly the same, because for him Deity comes first and not last. But it may be that he believes that the kingdom of God can be brought down to earth, and that the world can be made perfect if the human egos so will it. But the question here arises why, if the world issues from God, it does not issue perfect, and if God really wished that an imperfect world should issue forth from him, whether he would allow man to make it perfect. What are the grounds of our certainty that we shall succeed in making it perfect? Or are there any limits to the perfection which the world can attain? And what are they? These questions do not seem to have been raised by Iqbal and it is difficult to say how he would have answered them.

Iqbal's motive in advocating meliorism seems to be that man should not remain inactive in the belief that the world is incurably evil or that it is the business of God to make it better and so success is sure. Of the philosophers in India there is none who more emphasizes activity and condemns inactivity than Iqbal. Almost all contemporary Indian philosophers including Radhakrishnan, Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghose, Tilak, Svami Vivekananda, etc., condemn the negative attitude to the world; but in this condemnation and the exhortation to be active and to control the world of matter Iqbal is one of the few who have gone to the extreme. Aurobindo Ghose believes in everybody becoming a Superman, provided he works for it. This Superman is a ruler of the world, though he is a ruler of his own self also. He is the man nearest to God and who can make the Sakti or power of God work according to his will. Indeed, in order to attain this power he must cease to be selfish. Aurobindo

Ghose's yoga is therefore a yoga of the will. The Superman does not shun matter ; he does not fly from nature. On the other hand, he conquers it and controls it. And there is really no shunning of matter because matter is the energy of God. A very similar idea is found in Iqbal's writings.

"It is sweet to be God's viceregent in the world  
And exercise sway over the elements.  
God's viceregent is as the soul of the universe,  
His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name.  
He knows the mysteries of part and whole  
He executes the command of Allah in the world."<sup>1</sup>

This viceregent is really a sort of Superman who controls the entire nature, of course, in the name of God. And that he controls the world in the name of God shows that he is not egotistic and selfish. He is a ruler of the world just as much as he is a ruler of his own self. Iqbal writes :

"Thy soul cares only for itself, like the camel :  
It is self-conceited, self-governed, and self-willed.  
Be a man, get its halter into thine hand,  
That thou mayst become a pearl albeit thou art a potter's  
vessel."<sup>2</sup>

And further he says :

"If thou canst rule thy camel, thou wilt rule the world  
And wear on thy head the crown of Solomon."<sup>3</sup>

But in order to become a Superman one must be of strong character and must act.

"The man of strong character who is master of himself  
Will find fortune compliant.

If the world does not comply with his humour,  
He will try the hazard of war with Heaven."<sup>4</sup>

But there need be no war with Heaven. The man's end is not

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 79.

2. *Ibid*, p. 75.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 78-9.

4. *Ibid*, p. 90.

selfish ; he is master of himself, and by being a master of himself he has transcended himself. Only he has to act.

“The pith of life is contained in action,

To delight in creation is the law of life.”<sup>1</sup>

But now how are we to cease to be selfish ? How are we to be rulers of our selves ? Is it by complete self-surrender to God ? Does love of God involve such self-surrender ? Iqbal is opposed to every idea of self-negation. It is not self-negation but self-affirmation and self-assertion that he preaches. “Physically as well as spiritually man is a self-contained centre, but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. Not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary, he absorbs God into himself.”<sup>2</sup> The self-affirmation is preached to such an extreme as to advocate the absorption of even God and not surrender to him. Life is an assimilative activity and it assimilates even God. And good and evil are to be interpreted in terms of this assimilative activity. Personality is the tension we experience in this activity and “that which fortifies personality is good, and that which weakens it is evil”.<sup>3</sup> Thus while some preach that we should become one with God by complete surrender to him and by being absorbed by him, Iqbal preaches that we should become one with God rather by absorbing him, when our self-affirmation and self-assertion become complete. This is really a dangerous advice ; and it can be rightly followed by only a very few. It easily lends itself to the interpretation that selfishness and self-aggrandisement are the pathway to reality. Iqbal must not have meant them ; but it is very few that can see the truth underlying his words. Indeed he felt that Hindu intellectualism and Islamic pantheism tended to deprive people of their capacity for action and infused into them a spirit of resignation miscalled contentment, born of weak-

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1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 89.

2. *Ibid*, p. xix.

3. *Ibid*, p. xxii.

ness and self-abnegation. As an antidote to this spirit Iqbal preaches self-assertion and stresses it so much that it appears to be almost self-aggrandisement amounting to the subjugation of God himself for one's purpose. But Iqbal could not have meant it ; for he says :

“Gain knowledge of Life's mysteries !

Be a tyrant ! Ignore all except God !”<sup>1</sup>

Our duty to God and therefore the primacy of God is often repeated.<sup>2</sup> Yet on the whole one cannot but say that there is an over-emphasis on self-assertion, though it may be to counteract the mischief wrought by the spirit of resignation and passivity.

In accordance with his doctrine of self-assertion, Iqbal preaches a doctrine of vigorous and aggressive love. We have to love God ; but thereby we do not surrender our selves to him but rather absorb him. Love is a unifying force ; but by it we do not enter God's unity but rather make God enter the unity of our selves. But if all absorb God's unity into the unity of their respective selves and thereby become identical with God, then all become identical ; and probably we have to interpret Iqbal's assertion that the human ego is not annihilated in God to mean that the ego continues to be the ego by becoming the Ego of God. This point is not clearly stated by Iqbal. In what sense the absorption of God by the human ego has to be taken may be a matter for controversy and we may leave it undecided.

Very often in the history of religious thought we find that the love preached towards God is that of the weaker to the stronger sex. It is therefore a surrender of the whole personality, including will, thought and action, to God. And we rarely come across this love preached in the opposite direction. It is only in Iqbal that we find something like it. Iqbal does not say that God is a woman and that our love for him must be what it would be towards a woman. But he preaches aggressive love, a love that forces the object loved into union. The lover is not

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1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 94.

2. *Ibid*, p. 78.

to say : I am yours, do what you like with me ; but, you are mine and attune your will to mine. Iqbal says :

“The fountain of Life is Love’s flashing sword.”<sup>1</sup>

It is very doubtful whether a poet like Tagore would ever have associated love with a sword. Of course, love conquers ; it may conquer even the sword. But it is difficult to understand how it works with a sword. But after all Iqbal may be making an over-emphasis.

If we are to affirm ourselves, are we to abandon our desires, saying that they belong to the flesh and not to the soul ? Iqbal does not preach looking down upon our material nature.

“Life is latent in seeking,  
Its origin is hidden in desire,  
Keep desire alive in thy heart,  
Lest thy little dust become a tomb.”<sup>2</sup>

“Desire is the noose for hunting ideals,  
A binder of the book of deeds.  
Negation of desire is death to the living.”<sup>3</sup>

“Life is the hunter and desire the snare,  
Desire is Love’s message to beauty.”<sup>4</sup>

Iqbal cannot be here advocating the indulgence of any and every desire. For he preaches duty to God, and the desires naturally must conform to this duty. Only to counteract the teaching of otherworldliness and the escape from things material must he have been glorifying desire so much. Self-affirmation is possible only through our acting for the satisfaction of desires. And it is only for the satisfaction of desires that matter is appropriated and made part of self.

“Self-affirmation brings not-self to light.”

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 29.

2. *Ibid*, p. 23.

3. *Ibid*, p. 24.

4. *Ibid*, p. 61.

Iqbal like Nietzsche inveighs against the doctrine of self-negation as invented by the subject races of mankind in order to tame down the strong ruling races. True, the doctrine of self-negation in some of its forms is false and has produced disastrous consequences. But the doctrine of self-affirmation too, if it means aggression and aggrandisement, will lead to equally disastrous consequences. Examples need not be given now when the world is passing through one of the most evil times. Had Iqbal been living now, he would have toned down his utterances. Even if the weaker races with all their burden of poverty and misery are not able to assert themselves, in the division of the spoils of aggression the stronger races are sure to fall out, fight and perish. It is in principle impossible for them to come to an understanding in that division ; for aggression is the principle which will be applied by them to each other just as much as they applied it to the weaker races. And how that aggression can ever be love is beyond our comprehension. The sword of aggression produces always a double effect : it strikes both the striker and the struck. And though Iqbal's language lends itself to this interpretation, he could not have meant it. He wanted to preach a doctrine which would counterbalance the evil effects of the doctrine of self-negation and so over-stressed certain points. For we should not forget that the Superman of Iqbal, like the one of Aurobindo Ghose, is a self-ruler and not an egotist. And unless he is an egotist he cannot really be a tyrant. The Superman is a tyrant only in the sense that he is ruthless in carrying out the word of God. He may rule the world but for its good and not for his own self-satisfaction. His self is already controlled, and whatever satisfaction it derives it derives from carrying out the word of God. Education of the self consists in obedience, self-control and divine vice-regency.<sup>1</sup> Our interpretation must reconcile Iqbal's poetical utterances.

This emphasis on self-affirmation leaves on Iqbal's thought

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1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 72.



the stamp of individualism, though this individualism is tempered by the idea of obedience to God and absolute self-control. Iqbal adopts Rumi's idea of the evolution of man out of matter and maintains that immortality depends on man's own efforts. He says : "If he ( man ) does not take the initiative, if he does not evolve the richness of his being, if he ceases to feel the inward push of advancing life, then the spirit within him hardens into stone, and he is reduced to the level of dead matter."<sup>1</sup> As in the philosophy of Aurobindo Ghose, matter, according to Rumi, evolves into plant life, then into animal life and then into mind. But evolution should not stop with human beings. Man should rise higher, and through his own efforts may become one with God. Or he may fall and become dead matter again, and again pass through the higher stages. "Personal immortality, then, is not ours as of right, it is to be achieved by effort. Man is a candidate for it."<sup>2</sup> That is, the world is a vale of soul-making. But when the soul is made, it depends on the soul itself whether to become immortal or not.

Though Iqbal is first a poet and then a philosopher, the insight he showed into the problem of time, the nature of thought and of reality is profound. He has been able to develop a fairly systematic philosophy of self-affirmation which is really needed now by all the Asiatic peoples, though here and there his poetical expression is charged with over-emphasis. His idealism is personalistic and even absolutistic. And in spite of absolutism he has made a serious attempt to preserve the individuality of the human ego.

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1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 16.

2. *Ibid*, p. 165.

## SAKUNTALA : ITS INNER MEANING\*

Rabindranath Tagore

“Wouldst thou the young year’s blossoms and the fruits of its  
decline,  
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted,  
fed,  
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name  
combine ?

I name thee, O Sakuntala, and all at once is said.”

—Goethe.

GOETHE, the master-poet of Europe, has summed up his criticism of *Sakuntala* in a single quatrain ; he has not taken the poem to pieces. This quatrain seems to be a small thing like the flame of a candle, but it lights up the whole drama in an instant and reveals its inner nature. In Goethe’s words, *Sakuntala* blends together the young year’s blossoms and the fruits of its maturity ; it combines heaven and earth in one.

We are apt to pass over this eulogy lightly as a mere poetical outburst. We are apt to consider that it only means in effect that Goethe regarded *Sakuntala* as fine poetry. But it is not really so. His stanza breathes not the exaggeration of rapture, but the deliberate judgment of a true critic. There is a special point in his words. Goethe says expressly that *Sakuntala* contains the history of a development,—the development of flower into fruit, of earth into heaven, of matter into spirit.

In truth there are unions in *Sakuntala* ; and the motif of the play is the progress from the earlier union of the First Act,

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\* Translated from the original Bengali ( *Prācīna Sāhitya*—1907. ) The translation was found among Mr. O. F. Andrews’ papers. Unfortunately we do not know to whom we are indebted for the translation, as the name of the Translator was nowhere to be traced.  
—Ed.

with its earthly, unstable beauty and romance, to the higher union in the heavenly hermitage of eternal bliss described in the last Act. This drama was meant not for dealing with a particular passion, not for developing a particular character, but for translating the whole subject from one world to another,—to elevate love from the sphere of physical beauty to the eternal heaven of moral beauty.

With the greatest ease Kalidas has effected this junction of earth with heaven. His earth so naturally passes into heaven that we do not mark the boundary-line between the two. In the First Act the poet has not concealed the gross earthiness of the fall of Sakuntala : he has clearly shown, in the conduct of the hero and the heroine alike, how much desire contributed to that fall. He has fully painted all the blandishments, playfulness and flutterings of the intoxicating sense of youth, the struggle between deep bashfulness and strong self-expression. This is a proof of the simplicity of Sakuntala : she was not prepared beforehand for the outburst of passion which the occasion of Dushyanta's visit called forth ; she had not learned how to restrain herself, how to hide her feelings. Sakuntala had not known Cupid before ; hence her heart was bare of armour, and she could not distrust either the sentiment of love or the character of her lover. The daughter of the hermitage was off her guard, just as the deer there knew not fear.

Dushyanta's conquest of Sakuntala has been very naturally drawn. With equal ease has the poet shown the deep purity of her character in spite of her fall,—her unimpaired, innate chastity. This is another proof of her simplicity.

The flower of the forest needs no servant to brush the dust off her petals. She stands bare ; dust settles on her ; but in spite of it she easily retains her own beautiful cleanliness. Dust did settle on Sakuntala, but she was not even conscious of it. Like the simple wild deer, like the mountain spring, she stood forth pure in spite of it.

Kalidas has let his hermitage-bred youthful heroine follow

the unsuspecting path of nature ; nowhere has he restrained her. And yet he has developed her into the model of a devoted wife, with her reserve, endurance of sorrow, and the life of rigid spiritual discipline. At the beginning we see her self-forgetful and obedient to Nature's impulses like the plants and flowers ; at the end we see the deeper feminine soul,—sober, patient under ill, intent on austerities, strictly regulated by the sacred laws of piety. With matchless art Kalidas has placed his heroine on the meeting-point of action and calmness, of Nature and Law, of river and ocean, as it were. Her father was a hermit, but her mother was an *apsara*, a nymph. Her birth was the outcome of interrupted austerities, but her nurture was in a hermitage, which is just the spot where nature and austerities, beauty and restraint, are harmonised. There is none of the conventional bonds of society there, yet we have the harder regulations of religion. Her Gandharva marriage, too, was of the same type ; it had the wildness of Nature joined to the social tie of wedlock. The drama stands alone and unrivalled in all literature, because it depicts how restraint can be harmonised with freedom. All its joys and sorrows, unions and partings, proceed from the conflict of these two forces.

Sakuntala's simplicity is natural, that of Miranda not truly so. The different circumstances under which the two were brought up, account for this difference. Sakuntala's simplicity was not girt round by ignorance, as was the case with Miranda. We see in the First Act that Sakuntala's two companions did not let her remain unaware of the fact that she was in the first bloom of youth. She had learnt to be bashful. She also knew something of the world, because the hermitage did not stand altogether outside society ; the rules of home life were observed here too. She was inexperienced, though not ignorant, of the outside world ; but trustfulness was firmly enthroned in her heart. The simplicity which springs from such trustfulness had for a moment caused her fall, but it also redeemed her for ever. The trustfulness kept her constant to patience, forgiveness and loving kindness, in

spite of the cruellest breach of her confidence. Miranda's simplicity was never subjected to such a fiery ordeal ; it never clashed with knowledge of the world.

Our rebellious passions raise storms. In this drama Kalidasa has extinguished the volcanic fire of tumultuous passion by means of the tears of the penitent heart. But he has not dwelt too long on the disease ; he has just given us a glimpse of it and then dropped the veil. The desertion of Sakuntala by the polygamous Dushyanta, which in real life would have happened as a natural consequence of his character, is here brought about by the curse of Durvasa. Otherwise, the desertion would have been extremely cruel and pathetic and would have destroyed the peace and harmony of the whole play. But the poet has left a small rent in the veil through which we can get an idea of the royal sin. It is in the Fifth Act. Just before Sakuntala arrives at court and is repudiated by her husband, the poet momentarily draws aside the curtain from the King's love-affairs. Queen Hansapadika is singing to herself in her music room :

"O honey-bee, having sucked the mango blossoms in your search for new honey, you have clean forgotten your recent loving welcome by the lotus."

This tear-stained song of a stricken heart in the royal harem gives us a rude shock, especially as our heart was hitherto filled with Dushyanta's love-passages with Sakuntala. Only in the preceding Act we saw Sakuntala setting out for her husband's home in a very holy, sweet, and tender mood, carrying with herself the blessings of the hoary sage Kanva and the good wishes of the whole forest world. And now a stain falls on the picture we had so hopefully formed of the home of love to which she was going.

When the Jester asked, "What means this song ?" Dushyanta smiled and said, "We desert our lasses after a short spell of love-making, and therefore I have deserved this strong rebuke from Queen Hansapadika." This indication of the

fickleness of royal love is not purposeless at the beginning of the Fifth Act. With masterly skill the poet here shows that what Durvasa's curse had brought about had its seeds in human nature.

In passing from the Fourth Act to the Fifth we suddenly enter a new atmosphere ; from the ideal world of the hermitage we go forth to the royal court with its hard hearts and crooked ways of love-making. The beauteous dream of the hermitage is about to be broken. The two young monks who are escorting Sakuntala, at once feel that they have entered an altogether different world, "a house encircled by fire." By such touches at the beginning of the Fifth Act, the poet prepares us for the repudiation of Sakuntala at its end.

Then comes the repudiation. Sakuntala feels as if she has been suddenly struck with a thunderbolt. Like a deer stricken by a trusted hand, this daughter of the forest looks on with blank surprise, terror, and anguish. At one blow she is hurled away from the hermitage, both literal and metaphorical, in which she has so long lived. She loses her connection with the loving friends, the birds, beasts and plants and the beauty, peace and purity of her former life. She now stands alone, shelterless. In one moment the music of the first four Acts is stilled.

O the deep silence and loneliness that then surround her. She whose tender heart had made the whole world of the hermitage her own folk, today stands absolutely alone. She fills this vast vacuity with her mighty sorrow. With rare poetic insight Kalidas has declined to restore Sakuntala to Kanva's hermitage. After the renunciation by Dushyanta it was impossible for her to live in harmony with that hermitage in the way she had done before. She was no longer her former self ; her relation with the universe had changed. Had she been placed again amidst her old surroundings, it would only have cruelly exhibited the utter inconsistency of the whole situation. A mighty silence was now needed, worthy of the mighty grief of the mourner. But the poet has not shown us the picture of Sakuntala in the new hermitage,—parted from the friends of her girlhood, and

nursing the grief of separation from her lover. The silence of the poet only deepens our sense of the silence and vacancy which here reigned round Sakuntala. Had the repudiated wife been taken back to Kanva's home, that hermitage would have spoken. To our imagination its trees and creepers would have wept, the two girl friends would have mourned for Sakuntala, even if the poet had not said a word about it. But in the unfamiliar hermitage of Maricha, all is still and silent to us ; only we have before our mind's eye a picture of the world-abandoned Sakuntala's infinite sorrow, disciplined by penance, sedate and resigned,—seated like a recluse rapt in meditation.

Dushyanta is now consumed by remorse. This remorse is *tapasya*. So long as Sakuntala was not won by means of this repentance, there was no glory in winning her. One sudden gust of youthful impulse had in a moment given her up to Dushyanta, but that was not the true, the full winning of her. The best means of winning is by devotion, by *tapasya*. What is easily gained is as easily lost. Therefore, the poet has made the two lovers undergo a long and austere *tapasya* that they may gain each other truly, eternally. If Dushyanta had accepted Sakuntala when she was first brought to his court, she would have only added to the number of Hansapadikas, occupied a corner of the royal harem, and passed the rest of her life in neglect, gloom and uselessness.

It was a blessing in disguise for Sakuntala that Dushyanta abjured her with cruel sternness. When afterwards this cruelty reacted on himself, it prevented him from remaining indifferent to her. His unceasing and intense grief fused his heart and welded Sakuntala with it. Never before had the king met with such an experience. Never before had he had the occasion and means of loving truly. Kings are unlucky in this respect ; their desires are so easily satisfied that they never get what is to be gained by devotion alone. Fate now plunged Dushyanta into deep grief and thus made him worthy of true love,—made him renounce the role of a rake.

Thus has Kalidas burnt away vice in the internal fire of the sinner's heart ; he has not tried to conceal it from the outside. When the curtain drops on the last Act, we feel that all the evil has been destroyed as on a funeral pyre, and the peace born of a perfect and satisfactory fruition reigns in our hearts. He has made the physical union of Dushyanta and Sakuntala tread the path of sorrow, and thereby chastened and sublimated it into a moral union. Hence did Goethe rightly say that Sakuntala combines the blossoms of Spring with the fruits of Autumn ; it combines Heaven and Earth. Truly in Sakuntala there is one Paradise lost and another regained.

The poet has shown how the union of Dushyanta and Sakuntala in the First Act as mere lovers is futile, while their union in the last Act as the parents of Bharat is a true union. The First Act is full of brilliancy and movement. We there have a hermit's daughter in the exuberance of youth, her two companions running over with playfulness, the newly flowering forest creeper, the bee intoxicated with perfume, the fascinated king peeping from behind the trees. From this Eden of bliss Sakuntala, the mere sweetheart of Dushyanta, is exiled in disgrace. But far different was the aspect of the other hermitage where Sakuntala,—the mother of Bharat and the incarnation of goodness,—took refuge. There no hermit girls water the trees, nor bedew the creepers with their loving sister-like looks, nor feed the young fawn with handfuls of paddy. There a single boy fills the loving bosom of the entire forest world ; he absorbs all the loveliness of the trees, creepers, flowers and foliage. The matrons of the hermitage, in their loving anxiety, are fully taken up with the unruly boy. When Sakuntala appears, we see her clad in a dusty robe, face pale with austerities, doing the penance of a lorn wife, pure-souled. Her long penances have purged her of the evil of her first union with Dushyanta ; she is now invested with a new dignity, she is the image of motherhood, gentle and exquisite. Who can repudiate her now ?

The poet has shown here, as in *Kumarsambhava*, that the



Beauty that goes hand in hand with Moral Law is eternal, that the calm, controlled and beneficent form of Love is its best expression, that Beauty is truly charming under restraint and decays quickly when it gets wild and unfettered. This ancient poet of India refuses to recognise Love as its own highest glory ; he proclaims that Goodness is the final goal of Love. He teaches us that the love of man and woman is neither beautiful, nor lasting, so long as it remains self-centred, so long as it does not yield fruit, so long as it does not diffuse itself in society over son and daughter, guests and neighbours.

The two peculiar principles of India are the beneficent tie of home life on the one hand, and the liberty of the soul abstracted from the world on the other. In the world India is variously connected with many races and many creeds ; she cannot reject any of them. But on the altar of devotion ( *tapasya* ) India sits alone. Kalidas has shown, both in *Sakuntala* and *Kumarsambhava* that there is a harmony between these two principles, an easy transition from the one to the other. In his hermitage human boys play with lion cubs, and the hermit-spirit is reconciled with the spirit of the householder.

On the foundation of the hermitage of recluses Kalidas has built the home of the householder. He has rescued the relation of the sexes from the sway of lust and enthroned it in the holy and pure seat of asceticism. In the sacred books of the Hindus the ordered relation of the sexes has been defined by strict injunctions and laws. Kalidas has demonstrated that relation by means of the elements of Beauty. The Beauty that he adores is lit up by grace, modesty and goodness ; in its range it embraces the whole universe. It is fulfilled by renunciation, gratified by sorrow, and rendered eternal by religion. In the midst of this Beauty, the impetuous, unruly love of man and woman has restrained itself and attained to a profound peace, like a wild torrent merged in the ocean of Goodness. Therefore is such love higher and more wonderful than wild and unrestrained passion.

## PERSIAN ETHICS

Prof. Hadi Hasan, M.A., Ph.D.

THE *Akblaq-i-Jalali*, i.e. the Ethics of Jalalu'd Din Dawani, composed between 1467 and 1477 A. D. is perhaps the most important work existing in the Persian language ; but stiff, very stiff, in style ; and it is for this reason and not for its sublimity of thought that portions of it are prescribed for examinations. Jalalu'd Din, however, deserves to be read *in toto* ; his book has few rivals and his character had fewer ; he practised what he preached.

According to this Persian thinker, the human soul has three distinct powers : the discerning, the repelling, and the acquisitive. When the discerning power—the source of thought and judgment—is in equipoise, Wisdom is obtained ; when the repelling power—the source of anger and bravery—is in equipoise, Courage is obtained ; when the acquisitive power—the source of lust and hunger—is in equipoise, Temperance is obtained ; and from a mixture of the three—Wisdom, Courage, Temperance—is derived Equity on which rests the entire super-structure of Islamic ethics : “We have sent down the Book and the Balance along with it that men may conduct themselves with Equity.”

God is one, but His unity embraces opposites ; He is the first and the last ; the manifest and the hidden. Consequently even as Divine perfection is equipoise, *any* nature, the more excellent it is, the better will it be poised. This principle, if prevailing in the particles of elements, is equipoise of temperament ; in music is harmony ; in gestures, grace ; in language, eloquence ; in body, beauty ; in mind, equity. Plato and Cicero have both enunciated this doctrine ; but “in all the ancients,” says Thompson, “Greek or Roman, we shall look in vain for any passage in which it is so movingly and comprehensively put as in the *Akblaq-i-Jalali*.”

To proceed to the practice of ethics : in opposition to wisdom is ignorance ; and ignorance is either simple or compound : simple, when a person knows that he does not know ; and compound, when he does not know that he does not know. Simple ignorance is cured by reflecting on the state of animals, for man's superiority to animals lies in knowledge, and the ignorant man makes human nature brutish or even infra-brutish, for brutes being incapable of deliberation cannot be deformed by vice. The best of men are those who think for themselves ; the passable are those who are thought for ; but he that neither governs himself nor is governed is a worthless fellow : when best, a little worse than a man, and when worst, a little better than a beast. Consequently, compound ignorance is almost incurable : "the blind and the leprous I can cure, but I cannot cure the foolish." Let the patient study geometry, for geometry is a positive science : it separates the true and the false by the dearest interval, and it may succeed in reducing compound ignorance to simple, when a cure may be effected. In other words, Jalalu'd Din's tip is this : send mathematicians to lunatic asylums—I mean as teachers, not as patients.

Next is the eradication of a bad habit. Thought, not habit, should direct action, for habit is changeable : if after having willed to accomplish any act we repeat and practise the same, then a time comes when the act is performed with ease in the absence of reflection and in short becomes a disposition.

"Refrain tonight ;

And that shall lend a kind of easiness

To the next abstinence : the next more easy ;

For use almost can change the stamp of nature,

And master the devil or throw him out

With wondrous potency."

Proceeding now to the treatment of anger : like sulphur, oil, wood, anger is combustible ; the best is he who is slow to anger and quick to recover, who

"Carries anger as the flint bears fire

Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,  
And straight is cold again."

And the worst is he who is quick to anger and slow to recover,  
like a fiery deluge, fed with ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.  
The cure of the effect lies in the removal of the cause : if the  
cause of anger be beauty, birth, or wealth, remember, firstly that

"Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,  
But sad mortality o'ersways their power  
How with this rage shall Beauty hold a plea  
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?"

Secondly, that the distinction of birth belongs to your ancestor,  
and should that ancestor say :

"This distinction is mine, what have you, in your  
own nature, to be proud of?"

what answer could you give ?

And thirdly, that wealth is fugitive : "there be land-rats and  
water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves—I mean pirates—and  
then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks."

If the cause of anger be arrogance, how does arrogance  
befit one who is made of dust, returneth into dust, and is eaten  
of worms ? "That skull had a tongue in it : where be his  
quiddities now, his quillies, his cases, his tenures, and his  
tricks ? He might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his  
statutes, his fines, his recoveries : is this the fine of his fines and  
the recovery of his recoveries to have his fine pate full of fine  
dirt ?" The truth is that none is entitled to arrogance save God.  
Imagine us humbled and exposed, trembling under the hand of  
God, crying for mercy—imagine such a creature talking of  
satisfaction and revenge, refusing to be entreated, disdaining to  
forgive.

There remains the treatment for the fear of death. Now  
fear of death does not proceed from fear of cessation of existence  
( for the soul is immortal, being a ray of the Eternal Omni-  
potence ) ; nor does it proceed from fear of bodily pain ( for death  
which destroys the junction of body and soul must automatically

destroy pain ); nor does it proceed from fear of privation ( for the body *per se* has no sense ; it is the soul's continuance in the body which gives the body sense ; and how can the soul lose sense by separation from a body which has none ? ) As for fear of death arising from fear of punishment, retribution is a consequence of crime ; therefore, refrain from wrong-doing. It is from acts of sin that this fear in reality proceeds. The first and greatest punishment of sinners is that they have sinned ; the second, that they are always in terror, doubt and apprehension :

“And in the lowest deep, a lower deep  
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,  
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.”

The great moralist and satirist, Mirza Ali Akbar Khan Dihkhuda, however, has grave doubts of the terror of “the inner voice.” A wet dog happened to brush by a preacher who was on his way to say his prayers, whereupon the preacher promptly closed his eyes and said : “God willing, it is only a cat.” “This proverb,” says Dihkhuda, “is the basis of my story.”

The censor of religious morals of the city of Shaft, who specialized in high living and plain thinking, found himself still in bed when the cry to prayer was raised. Jealous of maintaining his reputation, he put on speed, bathed, changed, and was beating the road remarkably well for his weight, when a dog emerged from the runnel wherein it had fallen and shook itself dry against the spurting censor. The inner voice seized the opportunity and immediately pressed the claims of religious purity ; but the censor, already late for the prayer, was not to be deterred. “A dog in a runnel of water,” said he, “this is impossible. If it is not a fish, it is a duck ; but why no scales, no feathers ? Ah, it is a dolphin which, they say, frequents seas and pools and cisterns. I had read about him in ad-Damiri's *al-Haywan*<sup>1</sup> and in the *Shifa* of Avicenna ; but how can a hundred vague reports equal the proof positive of a pair of eyes ?” And so zoologically overcoming his scruples, the censor raised the hood over his eyes and

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1. *Life of Animals*, by Muhammad ad-Damiri ( died Cairo 1405 A.D. ).

flashed past like a meteor of the sky. And he rushed to the house of prayer, and a cry went up to the tinkling stars : "the censor, the censor ; the pure, the undefiled."

What thou callest conscience, O Shaykh, what is it save a bag inflated with wind ? When the lion hath fastened his teeth on the goat, dost thou know what conscience telleth him ? It says : "O king, live long and feed well and be happy, for this silly goat knoweth not that a simple process of digestion will presently transform him into a lion." Similarly, when the lazy labourer lets his wife die of starvation, conscience says : "This charming sweetheart in this dilapidated hut, had neither bread nor blanket ; thy manly neglect has ended a double pain—the pain that was hers ; the pangs that were thine." This conscience is a past master in producing from the same vat shades of pale, yellow, red, purple, black, even darker than black ; and in interpreting elephant for ant, ant for elephant, so much so that the Kurdish villain coolly said : "If I had'nt killed this fellow, would he then have lived for ever ?"

If fear of death arises from fear of separation from family, friends, children and relatives, then we are to remember

*Firstly*, that parental supervision is no guarantee of filial eminence : Thucydides, Aristides, Themistocles, Pericles—all had sons whom they endeavoured in vain to make distinguished.

*Secondly*,—and this is an improvement upon Cicero's favourite argument against sorrow—that sorrow is not an inevitable matter but a state into which volition largely enters, for *whatever* object eludes the pursuit of *whatever* person, undoubtedly there is a class of people who, being debarred from that same object, are nevertheless contented and happy—which shows sorrow to be no necessary concomitant of its loss.

*Thirdly*, that the things of the world are meant to go round, otherwise, our turn for possession would never have come. Similarly this turn must pass on to others, for property and retainers are nothing but deposits, and the time must come when deposits are to be restored.

*Fourthly and finally*, that apart from the fact that Immortality is the perpetuation of old age, if there were births and no deaths, then a single person (doubling once in twenty years) would produce at the end of four hundred years, one million forty eight thousand five hundred and seventy six human beings, and at the end of eight hundred years, proceeding like squares in a chess-board, the number would be one thousand and ninety nine billion five hundred and eleven million six hundred and twenty seven thousand seven hundred and seventy six, which barely gives each individual standing room upon the planet. Thus the desire for perpetual life is a fancy of those who deal in impossibilities.

# DĀRĀ SHIKUH\*

Bikrama Jit Hasrat

## IV

### SAINTS OF THE KĀDIRĪ ORDER

THE *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*<sup>70</sup> is Dārā Shikuh's second biographical work on saints. Unlike its predecessor, the *Safīnat-ul-Awliya* which included saints of diverse religious orders, it is exclusively devoted to the saints of the Kādirī order in India, with whom he was associated during his life. It was completed in the twenty-eighth year of the author in 1052 A.H. (1642 A.D.), only three years after the *Safīnat-ul-Awliya*. During his viceroyalty of Lahore in the year 1049 A.H. he met Mīān Mīr,<sup>71</sup> the saintly disciple of Shaikh Abdul Kādir Jilānī, and later in the year 1052 A.H. he came to know Mullāh Shāh Badakhshānī, another erudite Kādirī saint and a poet-philosopher of great spiritual influence at Kashmir.<sup>72</sup> Dārā Shikuh admits that both exercised an enormous influence on his mind and it cannot for a moment be denied, that whatever spiritual illumination he gained at this stage was chiefly due to their spiritual instructions. The inspiration obtained through his association with them inflamed his imagination. Their piety gave a decidedly spiritual turn to his

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\* For the first three sections see the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol V, Parts III & IV ; Vol. VI, Part I.

70. The work is still unpublished except in an Urdu translation lithographed at Lahore.

71. The *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* ( Urdu lithograph, Lahore ) p. 5, wherein he says, "Till at last I met a God-knowing man on 29th of Dhi-ul-Hijja, 1049 A.H., at the age of twenty-five. He became very kind towards me . . . I had become disgusted with this materialistic world and longed for spiritual illumination and now the doors of enlightenment and revelation were thrown open to me. I obtained what I sought."

72. *Sirr-i-Akbar* : Introduction : Ms. No. 52, in the Asfiya Library, Hyderabad Deccan, fol. 2a.



mind and even after the death of Mīān Mīr, for six years he received a healthy stimulus to his spiritual life from Mullāh Shāh and devoted himself to the study of the lives and miracles of the saints. It was in the former year, as we know, that he selected the path of the Kādirī Order for his spiritual enlightenment and salvation and became formally initiated into the fold of its fraternity. "God be praised," he writes to Shāh Dilruba, "due to my association with this glorious order, exoteric Islam has ceased to influence the mind of this fakir and the real esoteric 'infidelity' has shown its face".<sup>78</sup> At another place he hopes that "through the blessings of this hierarchy of the saints of the (Kādirī) order, I would acquire God's grace in this world and the hereafter." "O Lord," he continues in a verse, "my sole reliance is on thy mercy ; for I hope not to attain my goal through my actions."<sup>74</sup>

Thus his association with the religious order of the Kādirites gave a new turn to his mystic ideals and the eclectic pantheism of its crude discipline provided for him a field for their further development. Even at this early stage he felt : "Now my speech is identical with their speech. Nothing attracts me more than this sect which has fulfilled my spiritual aspirations. My heart is full of their mystic allusions and interpretations. I am completely captivated."<sup>75</sup> Elsewhere he remarks "The superiority and the stations of this glorious order have been revealed to me and all doubts and illusions with regard to its greatness have vanished from my mind. In my heart I know that its service constitutes my salvation in both the worlds."<sup>76</sup>

The *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* not only contains a comprehensive account of the lives of the contemporary Indian saints of this order but it also records his impressions of their devotional exercises which he had acquired after an intimate association with

78. *Ruka'at-i-Ālamgīr*, Vol I p. 822.

74. *Safīnat-ul-Awliya*, opt. cit. ( fol. 6. b. ).

75. *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* : Introduction.

76. *Ibid*, p. 9.

them. "I desired to record the mystic symbolism, religious practice and ascetic discipline of the sect in the form of a book," he writes, "but as every one knows that these secrets are better concealed than revealed and as I cannot express the delight and pleasure which I feel, I thought it advisable to narrate briefly the lives and miracles of this glorious hierarchy of saints." A short Introduction to the work is followed by a shorter Prologue. In the former he reiterates his veneration for the saints in general and classifies them into twelve different groups (*twāif*) who profess God, viz., the *Muwwahids* who are by far the best, the 'Arifs, the 'Ashiks, the *Ṣābiks*, the *Mubibs*, the *Muwwakins*, the *Makāshifs*, the *Mashāhids*, the *Sāliks*, the *Ṣādiks*, the *Rāds* and the *Murīds*. Corresponding to each of these groups are twelve attributes and fountain-heads, "from the eternal wine of which they receive inspiration." These are unity of God, devotion, sincerity, truth, humility, resignation, contentment, generosity, faith, wisdom, love and seclusion respectively. In the Prologue the superiority of the Kādirī Order is emphasised over and over again. It is held to be a composite of all these virtues. Besides various spiritual doctrines, viz., the importance of the spiritual guide for Divine Communion, the method to find and approach such guide, the desirability or otherwise of the esoteric songs, the method of contemplation and meditation, etc. are briefly discussed. The expository character of the work is apparent from the fact that the aphorisms of the saints have been discussed in the light of his personal experiences and the practices of the various religious orders, in relation to their views on different mystic problems, have been mentioned in a comparative sense. While upholding the superiority of the filiation of the Kādirī sect, to which his personal attachment and regard was undoubtedly unwavering, he has referred to many other religious sects :—the *Junaidī* of Shaikh Junaid, the *Zaidiyya* or *Wāhiddiyya* of Khwāja Abdul Wāhid Zaid, the *Nuriyya* of Shaikh Abul Hasan Nūrī, the *Ṭaifuriyya* of Bāyazīd Bistāmī, the *Adhamiyya* of Ibrahim Adham, the *Mubāshibīyya* of Hārith bin Asad, the *Subailiyya* of

Suhail bin Abdullāh Ṭustarī, the *Kharāẓīya* of Shaikh Abu Sa'īd Kharāz, the *Khafīfiya* of Shaikh Abu Abdullāh Khafīf and the four most prominent rival sects of the Kādiriya Order, viz., the *Chīṣṭīya* of Khwāja Mu'in-ud-Din Chīṣṭī, the *Nakashbandīya* of Shaikh Bahā-ud-Din, the *Subarawardīya* of Shaikh Shahāb-ud-Dīn and the *Kubrawīya* of Shaikh Najm-ud-Dīn.

The *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the life, miracles and supernatural gifts of Mīān Mīr under six sub-headings : pedigree, title and place of birth ; his relations with Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān ; his contentment ; general appearance ; dress and description of the places where he used to sit in meditation. The second section deals with the life and miracles of his sister Bībī Jamāl Khātun. The third section contains notices on the lives of Mīān Mīr's disciples in two *firkās*, viz., those who died before the completion of the work ( 1052 A. H. ) and contemporary Indian saints of the order. It is in the latter portion that he has noticed the life of Mullāh Shāh, his spiritual guide and preceptor.

Unlike the *Safīnat-ul-Awliya* which is mainly based on the standard works on the subject, like the *Nafhāt-ul-Uns* of Jami, the *Tadhkerāt-ul-Awliya* and others, the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* marks a further advance in his religious quest. It is the outcome of mature thought and experience. Not being a compilation of the orthodox oriental literature, it forms the fruit of his intimate knowledge of the actualities of belief and practice among the Kādirites and the distinct individual characteristics in their religious thought. The religious fabric of the Kādirites, as we will find presently, is unduly diminished by an overestimated importance attached to the supernatural powers of performing miracles. The system, it must be admitted, is intricately interwoven with the psychical phenomena viz., prognostications, miracles, spiritual visions, mystic interpretations of dreams and a wide range of hybrid superstitions. "It must be noted," remarks E. G. Browne,<sup>77</sup> "that certain aspects of Muslim saints as recorded

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77. *Literary History of Persia* : Vol. IV, p. 40—41.

by their disciples and admirers, are to the Western mind somewhat repellent ; their curses are no less effective than their blessings and their indulgence no less remarkable than their abstention, while grim jests on the part of such as have incurred their displeasure are not uncommon." Notwithstanding this aspect of the miracles of the saints, it cannot for a moment be denied, that they form, to a very great extent, the basis of popular belief in Islamic thought. According to Al-Hujwiri, these may be safely vouchsafed to a saint as long as he does not infringe the obligations of religious law.<sup>78</sup> Opinion as to their affirmation is widely controversial, but even the most orthodox Muslims admit that they are not intellectually impossible and their manifestation as a fact preordained by God does not in any way come into clash with the fundamental principles of Islam ; but to carry them beyond the borders of all intellectual phenomena and their conception as a genus is absolutely repugnant to the modern mind.

Dārā Shikuh's implicit faith in the miraculous power of the saints is quite untenable as he has nowhere tried to establish it on a sound and reasonable basis or on the evidence borne out by the *Kurān* and the Traditions. His appreciation of the fantastic charm of the supernatural often takes the shape of absurd sentimental incongruities mingled with an unsophisticated intellectualism, and though we cannot for a moment doubt his sincerity of purpose, we feel that his not too lukewarm belief in fatalism made him blind towards hard facts and stern actualities of life. This naturally became his greatest weakness and was, to a great extent, responsible for his failures in life. It also developed in him a defeatist mentality which he consciously or unconsciously shrouded under the veil of spiritual superiority. He often sought consolation under its shadow. At one time, when after a series of miserable failures in the expedition of Kandhār, in the year 1051 A. H., he led his army against Ṣafī Mirza, the ruler of Iran, whose attitude towards that Mughal province was threatening,

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78. *Kashf-al-Maḥjub*. Gibb. Memorial Edition p. 218.

he appealed to his spiritual guide Mullāh Shāh to come to his rescue. "When I proceeded to Kandhār to give a battle to Šafī Mirza, I appealed to Mullāh Shāh for help," he writes, "who wrote to me: '*when you shot the arrow it was not shot by you but by God Himself.*' Shortly afterwards the king of Iran fell so prostrate as never to rise again. He was poisoned by his own men and died."<sup>79</sup> But apart from this aspect of his superstitious convictions, however whimsical and eccentric they may appear, it can never be doubted, that the advancement of his religious belief, which gradually drifted him towards the dangerous waters of pantheism, was due to his association with the saints and a thorough knowledge of their religious experiences. The mystic allegories helped him to clarify and properly comprehend the practical aspects of Divine knowledge, the nature of various stages of the Path and the doctrines connected with them ; its immediate effect was the growth of a strong faith in his convictions and a rigour and assiduity in his devotion, the latter fact gradually tending to draw him towards a life of mystic contemplation.

The *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*, though a biographical work on the Kādirī saints, does not contain a systematic and lucid exposition of their doctrines. On the other hand, it narrates many personal religious experiences of the saints which give an idea of their mysterious ways of life. The doctrines of the Kādirites are not fundamentally different from other religious orders ; and as enunciated by Dārā Shikuh, they govern the conduct, rules and exercises, though not in a very rigid manner, according to the principles of Islam. Much emphasis is laid on peculiar religious ceremonies called the *Zikr*. They have strict rules for silent devotional exercises and prefer a solitary contemplative life. In the *Risālā Hak Numa*, he has dealt fully with the religious practices of "his own order" and it would not be out of place to give a brief synopsis of his impressions here.

*Zikr*, which literally means "remembering", in the mystic terminology signifies the religious devotion practised by the

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79. *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*, p. 144.

Kādirites. It is two-fold : *ẓikr-i-jalī* and *ẓikr-i-khāfī* ; the former is recited in public with loud voice while the latter is performed in silence or mentally. It consists of the recitation of a number of God's names and attributes and their influence on the initiated with the object of conveying its inner meaning and affecting thus "the union of heart and tongue" in invoking the name of God. With *Zikr* always accompanies the second stage of devotion—*Marākba* or silent meditation upon some prescribed verses of the *Kurān*.

The system of religious exercises of the Kādirites involve rigid disciplines of body and mind, but Dārā Shikuh had no faith in them. He considered that penances and self-mortifications, though of incalculable advantage to the regular ascetic, are in fact a hindrance in the way of the neophyte. Soon after his initiation into the fold he wrote : "It was at this time that God opened for me the gates of unity and wisdom . . . and my entry into the School of the Perfect was effected ; the discipline of the order to which the author owes his allegiance, contrary to the religious exercises of other sects, involves no pain and difficulty.

"There being no asceticism involved, all is gracious and felicitous ;  
All is love, affection, pleasure and ease."<sup>80</sup>

A brief analysis of Dārā Shikuh's exposition of the form of Kādirī meditation as given in the *Risālā Hak Numa* is necessary here. First of all man's troubled soul in search for Truth, comes into the Physical Plane ( '*Ālam-i-Nāsut* ) or the World of Waking Consciousness. In this world of sensation and perception, the attainment of the acme of existence is perfect, through the unbounden joy acquired therefrom, but his spiritual quest makes him restless. The first step which he should take is "to find out some quiet, solitary place for meditation." The method of meditation is simple : the novice must then concentrate all his attention on his heart for visualising the Beloved. There

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80. *Risālā Hak Numa*, p. 4-5.

are three centres of meditation in the heart, viz. the cedar-heart ( *dīl-i-ṣanawbarī* ) conical in shape, possessed by all men as well as animals, by which physical heart is not meant, as he adds, "it has a mystic significance known only to the selected few." Obviously the centre of astral body of man is implied here. The second is the spherical-heart ( *dīl-i-muddawarī* ) located in the centre of brain, which is colourless and corresponds with the Mental Plane ; and from this centre of meditation no danger of distraction is conceivable. The third is the lily-heart ( *dīl-i-nīlofirī* ) located in the rectal centre of the lower part of body.

The meditation on the three centres of heart, usher the neophyte into the Plane of Counterparts ( ' *Ālam-i-Mithāl* ) which form a gate-way to the Astro-mental Plane ( ' *Ālam-i-Malkūt* ). The latter is also called the World of Subtlety and the World of Dreams. In sharp contrast to the Physical Plane, the visions which he beholds in this world are not transitory and here the consciousness of the body gives way to an extremely refined thought-form ( *jaṣd-i-latīf* ), "an exact counterpart of the former, having eyes, ears, tongue and all other sense organs and also the internal functional organs, without however the external physical organs of flesh and blood."

The method of meditation in this world, "which would remove rust from the heart and from which the mirror of soul would become luminous", includes briefly *ẓikr-i-khāfi* or the recitation of God's name mentally and slowly without the movement of tongue. This is followed by the practice of *habs-i-dam* or the regulation of breath. Both are combined with perfect concentration on the heart. In the latter case the freedom of heart from all superfluities is essential, for unless complete attention is devoted to purge all dubious and distracting elements, the "internal sounds" would not be heard by the neophyte.

The internal sound, known in the mystic phraseology as the Voice of Silence, is sharply differentiated from the physical sound, which is compound and ephemeral and proceeds when two objects strike against each other ; and also from the physio-

logical sound which is boundless, infinite and self-existent, as it is produced without the contact of two dense bodies. This primeval sound is only heard by men of illumination. This form of meditation is termed as *Sultān-ul-Aẓkār* or the king of meditations. "O friend !" Dārā Shikuh explains,<sup>81</sup> "when you want to commence the practice of meditation called *Sultān-ul-Aẓkār*, proceed to a lonely spot, free from the haunts of men or to a cloister, where no sound can reach and sitting there direct your attention to your ears with a perfect concentration of mind ; then you would hear a subtle sound, which would gradually become so powerful and overwhelming that it would draw your mind aside from its environments and would submerge it into its own self. Once they asked the Prophet, in what manner the inspiration came to him. He replied that he heard a sound sometimes like the sound of a boiling cauldron and sometimes like the sound made by bees and sometimes he saw an angel in the form of a man who talked to him and sometimes he heard a sound like silvery bells or the beating of a drum. It is to this sound that an allusion is made in the following verse :

'No one knows about the abode of my sweet-heart,  
Of this much I am conscious that I hear the constant twinkling  
of the bells.' ( *Hafiz* )

And in this verse :

"To the caravan of my beloved I cannot reach,  
It is enough that the sound of bells is constantly ringing in my  
ears.' ( *Jami* )"

When the sufi disciple acquires perfection in this form of meditation, then the world of subtle and casual planes as well as the plane of absolute unity would become a blessing to him. "This practice would make you refined and homogeneous," he writes,<sup>82</sup> "and this ocean of subtle causes and absoluteness would efface your multi-colouredness and would make you uniform ;

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<sup>81.</sup> *Risālā Hak Numa*, p. 17.

<sup>82.</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.



the ocean of Truth, the fountain-head of your existence, would heave up in your heart and you would feel that every sound that exists in the universe emanates from the voice of unlimited immensity."

The third stage of meditation is in the Plane of Bliss ( '*Ālam-i-Jabrut* ) where a trance-like wonder overpowers and where "waves of bliss after bliss, of joy after joy, of contentment after contentment, and of peace and rest after peace and rest submerge the soul under their folds. The man enters the *Jabrut* unconsciously and pain and sorrow cannot come to him and no forms of either physical or astro-mental plane can have an access to his mind." The method of meditation in this plane is in this manner : all limbs of body should be at perfect rest and kept away from every kind of motion ; both the eyes must be closed and the right palm should be placed on the left and the heart should be emptied of all forms of physical and super-physical planes. . . .

And finally the Plane of Absolute Truth ( '*Ālam-i-Lāhut* ) which is the origin of the three lower planes of *Nāsūt*, *Malkūt* and *Jabrut*. It envelops them all and remains itself uniform in its essential nature and no modification or alteration is conceivable in it : "That is the first, that is the last, that is the manifest, that is the hidden and that with all objects is cognisant."

*Kādirī Symbolism.* There is no evidence in the works of Dārā Shikuh to show that after joining the Kādirī fold, he adopted the outward formalities of dress and costume enjoined upon the neophyte. The symbolism of the Kādirites, as we know from his circumstantial remarks in the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* and other works, is apparent in their costume. They wear a long *khirka* or mantle, made of coarse woolen material with upturned collar, wide sleeves reaching just below their knees. It is considered a symbol of piety and its origin is attributed to the holy mantle of the Prophet, which was entrusted to Uwais. The *kulah* or cap, made of a number of gores, each signifying a sin abandoned, is also held to be of Divine origin. Its long triangular

shape is adopted in consideration for the shape of the "vase of light" wherein God has deposited the soul of the holy Prophet. To this cap is attached a rose which is also a mystic symbol :

The rose on the head honours the wearer,  
It points to the path of Kādirī discipline. 88

It has three circles and numerous rings ; the former signify respectively the law of God as revealed by the holy Prophet, the path of the Kādirī order and Divine Knowledge—all signifying jointly that their acquisition is essential for the neophyte.

. . . . .

*The Life and Miracles of Mīān Mīr.* We now proceed to discuss his relations with his spiritual guide Mīān Mīr in the light of the notice on his life in the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*. The famous saint Mīān Mīr or Mīān Jiv was a descendant of Caliph 'Umar and his ancestors were natives of Sīstān which lies between Bhakkar and Thitha. Dārā Shikuh's account of his life is very meagre in the details of his early life. He was born in Sīstān in 957 A. H. ( 1550 A. D. ) and at the age of twelve he used to attend the discourses of Shaikh Khīḍar, a staunch adherent of the Kādirī order, who was renowned for his piety and learning. It was at the age of twenty-five that he arrived at Lahore and settled in Muhalla Bāghbānpura known as Khāfīpura. He stayed here for sixty-five years. In the year 1045 A. H. he breathed his last in the cell in which he resided in Muhalla Khāfīpura ; "his pure soul having taken leave of his bodily cage has passed into the regions of highest heavens—its real home, and thus the drop has become ocean." He was buried in the village called Gīathpur in the vicinity of 'Ālamganj near Lahore. The following chronogram, composed by Fatehullāh Shāh and recorded by Dārā Shikuh, is still inscribed on his tomb at Mīān Mīr near Lahore :

Mīān Mīr the chief of the gnostics,

The dust of whose portals is envied by the stone of the  
 alchemist,  
 Made his way to the city of eternity,  
 Being disgusted with the world of woe.  
 Reason wrote the year of his death :  
 "Mīān Mir has gone to the highest heaven."<sup>84</sup>

As we already know, Dārā Shikuh met Mīān Mir at Lahore in the company of his father and it seems that at that time he was much influenced by his piety and spiritual gifts. He gives a very vivid account of his first meeting with the saint. "His Majesty used to say," he writes, "that in his whole life he had come across two saints having the Knowledge of God—one was Mīān Mir the other Shaikh Muhammad Faḍalullah of Burhānpur. He felt great reverence for the former and visited him twice in the year 1049 A. H. I accompanied him during these visits and afterwards he used to say that Mīān Mir surpassed all saints in detachment and renunciation. . . . It so happened that at that time I was suffering from a chronic disease and for four months the physicians had not been able to cure me. The king took me by the hand and with great humility and reverence entreated the saint to pray to God for my health. The saint took my hand into his own and gave me a cup of water to drink. The result was immediate and within a week I recovered completely from the serious malady. At the termination of his conversation with the saint, the king presented him with a turban and a rosary and received his benedictions."<sup>85</sup>

The second visit produced still greater effect on the mind of the prince. "On this occasion I went bare-footed to his house and he gave me a rosary ; and while he was talking to the king, he threw out of his mouth chewed clove which I gathered and ate and when the king left I lingered behind. I went up to him and placing my head on his foot remained in that position for some time." The same year on the 27th of Ramdhan he visited

84. The original line in Persian gives this date of his death as 1045 A. H.

85. *Vide* Lahore lithograph edition, p. 142.

him again and received instructions in *Mushāhida* ( contemplation ) and beheld the *Lailat-ul-Kadr*.<sup>86</sup> "One night I saw Mīān Mir," he continues, "and he said to me, 'Come I would teach you the method of contemplation.' Having himself sat in meditation, he asked me to sit in the like manner and then he initiated me into its secrets. . . . At another occasion on Monday the night of 7th of Dhi-ul-Hajj, I found him reposing outside his house. I went near and paid my respects. He took me by the hand and drew me near ; then he drew my shirt aside and also removed his cloak thus exposing his chest. He then drew me close to him and placing his right nipple upon my own remaked, 'It had been entrusted to me, take it away.' Thereafter such exuberating lights emanating from his heart entered mine that eventually I begged, 'It is enough, Sir, if you give me more my heart would burst.' From that moment I find my heart full of enlightenment and ecstasy."<sup>87</sup>

The account of his beholding the *Lailat-ul-Kadr* is more vivid. "In the early hours of a Monday morning, by the Grace of God and kindness of Mīān Mir, I witnessed the 'night of power'. I was sitting with my face turned towards the K'aba when a sudden restlessness of mind overtook me. I stood up and paced steadily on the ground, but my mind was awake and perturbed. At dawn I saw a palace of grand structure which was surrounded on all sides by gardens. As I thought, it was Mīān Mir's mausoleum. He came out of the tomb and sat on a chair and when he saw me he called me by his side and showed me every kindness. Afterwards he took me by the hand and said, 'Come I would teach you something'. He then uncovered my face and placed his two index fingers in my ears, with the result that the *Sultān-ul-Aẓkār* overpowered me, and the sound affected

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86. *The Lailat-ul-Kadr* or "the night of power" is a mysterious night in the month of Ramdhan, the precise date of which is said to have been known only to the Prophet and a few of his Companions. . . . The excellences of this night are said to be innumerable and it is believed that during its solemn hours the whole animal and vegetable creation bow down in humble adoration to the Almighty ( Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 284 ).

87. *Ibid* p. 142—144.

me so much that after enveloping me within itself, it threw me off the ground. I then lost my consciousness and such a 'state' overtook me as it is not possible for me either to describe or write. It can neither be comprehended in interpretations or allusions. I obtained what I sought. My pleasure increased and to me distance and nearness became alike. *God be praised. That is the bounty of God. He gives it to any one He wishes. His bounty is great.*"

Another story<sup>88</sup> is told about Jahangir and Mīān Mīr. Speaking of the accomplishments of the latter, he records that Jahangir had little faith in saints and *derveshes* and he used to torture them; but on the other hand he entertained great esteem for Mīān Mīr. Once he invited him to Agra and treated him with great veneration. The Shaikh had a very long conversation with His Majesty in which he dwelt mainly on the instability of the world; his advice had such an effect on the mind of the Emperor that he expressed a desire to become a disciple of the saint and abandon the world. The latter, however, admonished him to continue his worldly pursuits, observing that kings had been made for the protection of God's people and that in ruling over them he was discharging an important duty entrusted to him by the Creator.

The Emperor was much pleased to hear this and he asked, "O Shaikh, do you want anything?"

"I shall ask you for one thing;" replied the Shaikh, "do you promise to give it to me?"

"Most certainly I will grant it," said Jahangir

The holy Shaikh said, "My only wish is that Your Majesty would not give me the trouble of coming to you again."

With the assurance of the Emperor to this effect, the Shaikh withdrew; but the former continued to send him autograph letters.<sup>89</sup>

( To be Continued. )

88. *Ibid.* Also in Latif's : *History of Lahore*, where this incident is told in a slightly different manner-

89. Two such letters are recorded by Dārī Shikuh in the *Sakmat-ul-Awliya* (p. 88.).

## MY BOYHOOD DAYS\*

Rabindranath Tagore

THE Calcutta where I was born was an altogether old-world place. Hackney carriages lumbered about the city raising clouds of dust, and the whips fell on the backs of skinny horses whose bones showed plainly below their hide. There were no trams then, no buses, no motors. Business was not the breathless rush that it is now, and the days went by in leisurely fashion. Clerks would take a good pull at the hookah before starting for office, and chew their betel as they went along. Some rode in palanquins, others joined in groups of four or five to hire a carriage in common, which was known as a "share-carriage." Wealthy men had monograms painted on their carriages, and a leather hood over the rear portion, like a half-drawn veil. The coachman sat on the box with his turban stylishly tilted to one side, and two grooms rode behind, girdles of yaks' tails round their waists, startling the pedestrians from their path with their shouts of "Hey-yo !"

Women used to go about in the stifling darkness of closed palanquins ; they shrank from the idea of riding in carriages, and even to use an umbrella in sun or rain was considered unwomanly. Any woman who was so bold as to wear the new-fangled bodice, or shoes on her feet, was scornfully nicknamed "memsahib", that is to say, one who had cast off all sense of propriety or shame. If any woman unexpectedly encountered a strange man, one outside her family circle, her veil would promptly descend to the very tip of her nose, and she would at once turn her back on him. The palanquins in which women

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\* Translated from the original Bengali by Marjorie Sykes. The translation will be continued serially. The original (ছন্দোবল) will be published as a separate volume sometime in September next by the Visva-Bharati Publishing Department, Calcutta. *Copyright reserved.—Ed.*

went out were shut as closely as their apartments in the house. An additional covering, a kind of thick tilt, completely enveloped the palanquin of a rich man's daughters and daughters-in-law, so that it looked like a moving tomb. By its side went the durwan. His work was to sit in the entrance and watch the house, to tend his beard, safely to conduct the money to the bank and the women to their relatives' houses, and on festival days to dip the lady of the house into the Ganges, closed palanquin and all. Hawkers who came to the door with their array of wares would grease Shivrindan's palm to gain admission, and the drivers of hired carriages were also a source of profit to him. Sometimes a man who was unwilling to fall in with this idea of going shares would create a great scene in front of the porch.

Our "jamadar" Sobha Ram who was a wrestler, used to spend a good deal of time in practising his preparatory feints and approaches, and in brandishing his heavy clubs. Sometimes he would sit and grind hemp for drink, and sometimes he would be quietly eating his raw radishes, leaves and all, when we boys would creep upon him and yell "Radhakrishna !" in his ear. The more he waved his arms and protested the more we delighted in teasing him. And perhaps—who knows ?—his protests were merely a cunning device for hearing repeated the name of his favourite god.

There was no gas then in the city, and no electric light. When the kerosine lamp was introduced, its brilliance amazed us. In the evening the house-servant lit castor-oil lamps in every room. The one in our study-room had two wicks in a glass bowl.

By this dim light my master taught me from Peary Sarkar's first book. First I would begin to yawn, and then, growing more and more sleepy, rub my heavy eyes. At such times I heard over and over again of the virtues of my master's other pupil Satin, a paragon of a boy with a wonderful head for study, who would rub snuff in his eyes to keep himself awake, so earnest was he. But as for me—the less said about that the better !

Even the awful thought that I should probably remain the only dunce in the family could not keep me awake. When nine o'clock struck I was released, my eyes dazed and my mind drugged with sleep.

There was a narrow passage, enclosed by latticed walls, leading from the outer apartments to the interior of the house. A dimly burning lantern swung from the ceiling. As I went along this passage, my mind would be haunted by the idea that something was creeping upon me from behind. Little shivers ran up and down my back. In those days devils and spirits lurked in the recesses of every man's mind, and the air was full of ghost stories. One day it would be some servant girl falling in a dead faint because she had heard the nasal whine of *Shak-chunni*. The female demon of that name was the most bad-tempered devil of all, and was said to be very greedy of fish. Another story was connected with a thick-leaved *badam* tree at the western corner of the house. A mysterious Shape was said to stand with one foot in its branches and the other on the third storey cornice of the house. Plenty of people declared that they had seen it, and there were not a few who believed them. A friend of my elder brother's laughingly made light of the story, and the servants looked upon him as lacking in all piety and said that his neck would surely be wrung one day and his pretensions exposed. The very atmosphere was so enmeshed in ghostly terrors that I could not put my feet into the darkness under the table without them getting the creeps.

There were no water-pipes laid on in those days. In the spring months of *Magh* and *Falgun* when the Ganges water was clear, our bearers would bring it up in brimming pots carried in a yoke across their shoulders. In the dark rooms of the ground floor stood rows of huge water jars filled with the whole year's supply of drinking water. All those musty, dingy, twilight rooms were the home of furtive "Things"—which of us did not know all about those "Things"? Great gaping mouths they had, eyes in their breasts, and ears like winnowing fans; and



their feet turned backwards. Small wonder that my heart would pound in my breast and my knees tremble when I went into the inner garden, with the vision of these devilish shapes before me.

At high tide the water of the Ganges would flow along a masonry channel at the side of the road. Since my grandfather's time an allowance of this water had been discharged into our tank. When the sluices were opened the water rushed in, gurgling and foaming like a waterfall. I used to watch it fascinated, holding on by the railings of the south verandah. But the days of our tank were numbered, and finally there came a day when cartload after cartload of rubbish was tipped into it. When the tank no longer reflected the garden, the last lingering illusion of rural life left it. That *badam* tree is still standing near the third storey cornice, but though his footholds remain, the ghostly shape that once bestrode them has disappeared for ever.

.. .. .

The palanquin belonged to the days of my grandmother. It was of ample proportions and lordly appearance. It was big enough to have needed eight bearers for each pole. But when the former wealth and glory of the family had faded like the glowing clouds of sunset, the party of bearers, with their gold bracelets, their thick earrings, and their sleeveless red tunics, had disappeared along with it. The body of the palanquin had been decorated with coloured line drawings, some of which were now defaced. Its surface was stained and discoloured, and the coir stuffing was coming out of the upholstery. It lay in a corner of the counting-house verandah as though it were a piece of mere modern lumber. I was seven or eight years old at that time.

I was not yet, therefore, of an age to put my hand to any serious work in the world, and the old palanquin on its part had been dismissed from all useful service. Perhaps it was this fellow-feeling that so much attracted me towards it. It was to me an island in the midst of the ocean, and I on my holidays became

Robinson Crusoe. There I sat within its closed doors, completely lost to view, delightfully safe from prying eyes.

Outside my retreat, our house was full of people, innumerable relatives and other folk. From all parts of the house I could hear the shouts of the various servants at their work—Pari the maid is returning from the bazaar through the front courtyard with her vegetables in a basket on her hip. Dukhon the bearer is carrying in Ganges water in a yoke across his shoulder. The weaver woman has gone into the inner apartments to trade the newest style of saris. Dinu the goldsmith, who receives a monthly wage, usually sits in the room next to the lane, blowing his bellows and carrying out the orders of the family; now he is coming to the counting house to present his bill to Kailash Mukherjee, who has a quill pen stuck over his ear. The carder sits in the courtyard cleaning the cotton mattress stuffing on his twanging bow. Mukundalal the durwan is rolling on the ground outside with the one-eyed wrestler, trying out a new wrestling fall. He slaps his thighs loudly, and repeats his “physical jerks” twenty or thirty times, dropping on all fours. There is a crowd of beggars sitting waiting for their regular dole.

The day wears on, the heat grows intense, the clock in the gate-house strikes the hour. But inside the palanquin the day does not acknowledge the authority of clocks. Our midday is that of former days, when the drum at the great door of the king’s palace would be beaten for the breaking-up of the court, and the king would go to bathe in sandal-scented water. At midday on holidays those in charge of me have their meal and go to sleep. I sit on alone. My palanquin, outwardly at rest, travels on its imaginary journeys. My bearers, sprung from “airy nothing” at my bidding, eating the salt of my imagination, carry me wherever my fancy leads. We pass through far, strange lands, and I give each country a name from the books I have read. Sometimes our road lies through a deep forest. Tigers’ eyes blaze from the thickets, my flesh creeps and tingles. With me is Biswanath the hunter; his gun speaks—Crack! Crack! and

there, all is still. Sometimes my palanquin becomes a peacock-boat, floating far out on the ocean till the shore is out of sight. The oars fall into the water with a gentle splash, the waves swing and swell around us. The sailors cry to us to beware, a storm is coming. By the tiller stands Abdul the sailor, with his pointed beard, shaven moustache and close-cropped head. I know him, he brings hilsa fish and turtle eggs from the Padma for my elder brother.

Abdul has a story for me. One day at the end of *Chaitra*\* he had gone out in a dinghy to catch fish when suddenly there arose a great *Baisakh*† gale. It was a tremendous typhoon and the boat sank lower and lower. Abdul seized the tow-rope in his teeth, and jumping into the water swam to the shore, where he pulled his dinghy up after him by the rope. But the story comes to an end far too quickly for my taste, and besides, the boat is not lost, everything is saved—that isn't what I call a story! Again and again I demand, "What next?" "Well," says Abdul at last, "after that there were great doings. What should I see next but a panther with enormous whiskers. During the storm he had climbed up a *pakur* tree on the village ghat on the other side of the river. In the violent wind the tree broke and fell into the Padma. Brother Panther came floating down on the current, rolled over and over in the water and coming nearer and nearer to my bank. As soon as I saw him I made a noose in my tow rope. The wild beast drew near, his big eyes glaring. He had grown very hungry with swimming, and when he saw me saliva dribbled from his jaws. But though he had met many other men, he did not know Abdul. I shouted to him, "Come on, old boy", and as soon as he planted his fore feet on the shore I dropped my noose round his neck. The more he struggled to get free the tighter grew the noose, until his tongue began to loll out. . . ." I am tremendously excited.

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\* March-April.

† Nor'-wester, a very common phenomenon in Bengal in the beginning of the hot weather.

"He died, didn't he Abdul?" I ask. "Died?" says Abdul, "He couldn't die for the life of him! Well, the river was in spate, and I had to get back to Bahadurganj. I yoked my young panther to the dinghy and made him tow me fully forty miles. Oh, he might roar and snarl, but I goaded him on with my oar, and he carried me a ten or fifteen hours' journey in an hour and a half! Now, my little fellow, don't ask me what happened next, for you won't get an answer."

"All right," say I, "so much for the panther; now for the crocodile?" Says Abdul, "I have often seen the tip of his nose above the water. And how craftily he smiles as he lies basking in the sun, stretched at full length on the shelving sandbanks of the river. If I'd had a gun I should have made his acquaintance. But my license has expired. . . ."

"Still, I can tell you one good yarn. One day Kanhi the gypsy woman was sitting on the bank of the river trimming bamboo with a bill-hook, with her young goat tethered near by. All at once a crocodile appeared on the surface, seized the billy-goat by the leg and dragged it into the water. With one jump the gypsy woman landed astride on its back, and began sawing with her sickle at the throat of the "demon-lizard", over and over again. The beast let go of the goat and plunged into the water. . . ."

"And then? And then?" comes my excited question. "Why," says Abdul, "the rest of the story went down to the bottom of the river with the crocodile. It will take some time to get it up again. Before I see you again I will send somebody to find out about it, and let you know." Abdul has never come again; perhaps he is still looking for news.

So much, then, for my travels in the palanquin. Outside the palanquin there were days when I assumed the role of teacher, and the railings of the verandah were my pupils. They were all afraid of me, and would cower before me in silence. Some of them were very naughty, and cared absolutely nothing for their books. I told them with dire threats that when they grew up

they would be fit for nothing but casual labour. They bore the marks of my beatings from head to foot, yet they did not stop being naughty. For it would not have done for them to stop, it would have made an end of my game.

There was another game too, with my wooden lion. I heard stories of poojah sacrifices and decided it would be a fine thing to sacrifice the lion. I rained blows on his back—with a frail little stick. There had to be a “mantra”, of course, otherwise it would not have been a proper poojah :—

“Liony, liony, off with your head,

Liony, liony, now you are dead.

Woofle the walnut goes clappety clap,

Snip, snop, SNAP !”

I had borrowed almost every word in this from other sources ; only the word walnut was my own. I was very fond of walnuts. From the word “clappety clap” you can see that my sacrificial knife was made of wood. And the word “snap” shows that it was not a strong one.

.. .. .

The clouds have had no rest since yesterday evening. The rain is pouring incessantly. The trees stand huddled together in a seemingly foolish manner ; the birds are silent. I call to mind the evenings of my boyhood.

We used then to spend our evenings in the servants' quarters. At that time English spellings and meanings did not yet lie like a nightmare on my shoulders. My third brother used to say that I ought first to get a good foundation of Bengali and only afterwards to go on to the English superstructure. Consequently while other schoolboys of my age were glibly reciting “I am up,” “He is down,” I hadnot even started on B, A, D, bad and M, A, D, mad.

In the speech of the nabobs the servants' quarters were then called “toshakhana.” Even though our house had fallen

far below its former aristocratic state, these old high-sounding names still clung to it.

On the southern side of this "toshakhana" a castor oil lamp burned dimly on a glass stand in a big room ; on the wall was a picture of Ganesh and a crude country painting of the goddess Kali, round which the wall lizards hunted their insect prey. There was no furniture in the room, merely a soiled mat spread on the floor.

You must understand that we lived like poor people, and were consequently saved the trouble of keeping a good stable. Away in a corner outside, in a thatched shed under a tamarind tree, was a shabby carriage and an old horse. We wore the very simplest and plainest clothes, and it was a long time before we even began to wear socks. We adapted ourselves easily to our poverty-stricken condition, the wrecks of our former glory.

The name of the servant who presided over our mat seat was Brajeswar. His hair and beard were grizzled, the skin of his face dry and tight-drawn ; he was a man of serious disposition, harsh voice, and deliberately mouthed speech. His former master had been a prosperous and well-known man, yet necessity had degraded him from that service to the work of looking after neglected children like us. I have heard that he used to be a master in a village school. To the end of his life he kept this school-masterly language and prim manner. Instead of saying "The gentlemen are waiting", he would say "They await you", and his masters smiled when they heard him. He was as finicky about caste matters as he was conceited. When bathing he would go down into the tank and push back the oily surface water five or six times with his hands before immersing himself. When he came out of the tank after his bath Brajeswar would edge his way through the garden in so gingerly a way that one would think he could only keep caste by avoiding all contact with this unclean world that God has made. He would talk very emphatically about what was right and what was wrong in manners and behaviour. And besides, he held his head a little on one side, which made his words all the more impressive.

But with all this there was one flaw in his character as *guru*. He cherished secretly a suppressed greed for food. It was not his method to place a portion of food properly on our plates before the meal. Instead, when we sat down to eat he would take one *luchi* at a time, and dangling it at a little distance ask, "Do you want any more?" We knew by the tone of his voice what answer he desired, and I usually said that I didn't want any. After that he never gave us an opportunity to change our minds. The milk bowls also had an irresistible attraction for him—an attraction which I never felt at all. In his room was a small wired food-safe with shelves in it. In it was a big brass bowl of milk, and *luchis* and vegetables on a wooden platter. Outside the wire-netting the cat prowled longingly to and fro sniffing the air.

From my childhood upwards these short commons suited me very well. Small rations cannot be said to have made me weak. I was, if anything, stronger, certainly not weaker, than boys who had unlimited food. My constitution was so abominably sound that even when the most urgent need arose for avoiding school, I could never make myself ill by fair means or foul. I would get wet through, shoes, stockings and all, but I could not catch cold. I would lie on the open roof in the heavy autumn dew ; my hair and clothes would be soaked, but I never had the slightest suspicion of a cough. And as for that sign of bad digestion known as stomachache, my stomach was a complete stranger to it, though my tongue made use of its name with mother in time of need. Mother would smile to herself and not feel the least anxiety, she would merely call the servant and tell him to go and tell my master that he should not teach me that evening. Our old fashioned mothers used to think it no harm if the boys occasionally took a holiday from study. If we had fallen into the hands of these present-day mothers, we should certainly have been sent to the master, and had our ears tweaked into the bargain. Perhaps with a knowing smile they would have dosed us with castor oil, and our pains would have been

permanently cured. If by chance I got fever, no one ever called it fever, but "body heat". I had never set eyes on a thermometer in those days. Dr. Neelmadhab would come and place his hand on my body, and then prescribe as the first day's treatment castor oil and fasting. I was allowed very little water to drink, and what I had was hot, with two or three cardamoms for flavouring. After this fast, the "mourala" fish soup and soft-boiled rice which I got on the third day seemed a veritable food of the gods. Serious fever I do not remember, and I never heard the name of malaria. I do not remember quinine—that castor oil was my most distasteful medicine. I never knew the slightest scratch of a surgeon's knife; and to this very day I do not know what measles and chicken-pox are. In short, my body remained obstinately healthy. If mothers want their children to be so healthy that they will be unable to escape from the school master, I recommend them to find a servant like Brajeswar. He would save not only food bills but doctor's bills also, especially in these days of mill flour and adulterated ghee.

You must remember that in those days chocolate was still unknown in the bazaar. There was a kind of rose lollipop to be had for a farthing. I do not know whether modern boys' pockets are still made sticky by this sesamum-covered sugar-lump, with its faint scent of roses. Certainly it is ashamed to enter the houses of respectable people nowadays. Where too are those cone-shaped packets of fried spices? And those cheap sesamum sweetmeats? Do they still exist? If not, it is of no use to try to bring them back.

Day after day, in the evenings, I listened to Brajeswar reciting the seven cantos of Krittibas' *Ramayana*. Kishori Chatterjee used to drop in sometimes while the reading was going on. He had by heart doggerel versions of the whole *Ramayana*, tune and all. He took possession at once of the seat of authority, and superseding Krittibas, would begin to recite his doggerel stanzas in great style :

Lakshman O hear me



Greatly I fear me  
Dangers are near me.

There was a smile on his lips, his bald head gleamed, the song poured from his throat in a torrent of sound, the rhymes jingled and rang verse after verse, like the music of pebbles in a brook. At the same time he would be using his hands and feet in acting out the thought. It was Kishori Chatterjee's greatest grief that Dadabhai, as he called me, could not join a troupe of strolling players and turn his splendid voice to account. If I did that, he said, I should certainly make my name.

By and by it would grow late and the assembly on the mat would break up. We would go into the house, to mother's room, haunted and oppressed on our way by the terror of devils. Mother would be playing cards with her aunt, the inlaid parquet floor gleamed like ivory, a coverlet was spread on the big divan. We would make such a disturbance that mother would soon throw down her hand and say, "If they are going to be such a nuisance, auntie, you'd better go and tell them stories." We would wash our feet with water from the pot on the verandah outside, and climb on to the bed, pulling "Didima" with us. Then it would begin—stories of the princess from the demon city and her magical awakening. The Princess might wake, but it soon became impossible to awaken me. . . . In the early part of the night the jackals would begin to howl. In those days their long-drawn wail still filled the night round some of the old houses of Calcutta.

.. ..

When I was a little boy Calcutta city was not so wakeful at night as it is now. Nowadays, as soon as the day of sunlight is over, the day of electric light begins. There is not much work done in it, but there is no rest. The fire of activity continues to smoulder in the charcoal after the blazing wood has burnt itself out. The oil mills are still, the steamer sirens are silent, the labourers have left the factories, the buffaloes which pull the drays of jute bales are stabled in the tin-roofed sheds. But the nerves

of the city are throbbing still with the fever of thought which has burned all day in her brain. Buying and selling go on as by day in the shops that line the streets, though the fire is a little choked with ash. Motors continue to run in all directions, emitting all kinds of raucous grunts and groans, though they no longer run with the zest of the morning. But in those old times which we knew, when the day was over whatever business remained undone wrapped itself up in the black blanket of the night and went to sleep in the darkened ground-floor premises of the city. Outside the house the evening sky rose dim and mysterious. It was so still that we could hear, even in our own street, the shouts of the grooms from the carriages of those people of fashion who were returning from taking the air in Eden Gardens by the side of the Ganges.

In the hot season of *Chaitra* and *Baishakh* the hawkers would go about the streets shouting "I-i-i-ce". In a big pot full of lumps of ice and salt water were little tin containers of what we called "kulpi" ice—nowadays ousted by the more fashionable "icecream". No one but myself knows how my mind thrilled to that cry as I stood on the verandah facing the street. Then there was another cry, "*Bel*-flowers". Nowadays for some reason I hear little of the gardener's baskets of spring flowers—I do not know why. But in those days the air was full of the scent of the *bel* flowers which the women and girls wore in their hairknots. Before they went to bathe the women would sit outside their rooms with a mirror set up before them, and dress their hair. The knot would be skilfully bound with the black hair braid into all sorts of different styles. They wore black-bordered Chandernagore saris, pleating them at the waist with a practised twist of the fingers. The barber's wife would come to massage their feet with pumice and paint them with red lac. She and her like were the gossip-mongers of the women's courts.

The crowds returning from office or from college did not then, as they do now, rush to the football fields, clinging in swarms to the footboards of the trams. Nor did they crowd in

front of cinema halls as they returned. There was some interest shown in drama, but we were only children at the time, so I can say little about it. Children of those times got no share in the pleasures of the grown-ups, even from a distance. If we were bold enough to go near, we should be told, "Off with you, go and play." But if we boys made the amount of noise appropriate for proper play, it would then be, "Be quiet, do." Not that the grown-ups themselves conducted their pleasures and conversation in silence, by any means ; and now and again we would stand on the fringe of their far-flung jubilations, as though sprinkled by the spray of a waterfall. We would hang over the verandah on our side of the courtyard, staring across at the brilliantly lit ballroom on the other side. Big coaches would roll up to the portico one after another. Some of our elder brothers conducted the guests upstairs from the front door, sprinkling them with rose-water from the sprinkler, and giving each one a small buttonhole or nosegay of flowers. As the dramatic entertainment proceeded, we could hear the sobs of the "highcaste girl" heroine, but we could make out nothing of their meaning, and our longing to know grew intense. We discovered later that though the sobber was certainly highcaste, "she" was merely our own brother-in-law. But in those days grown-ups and children were kept apart as strictly as men and women with their separate apartments. The singing and dancing would go on in the blaze of the drawing-room chandeliers, the men would pull at the hookah, the women of the family would take their betel boxes and sit in the subdued light behind their screen, the visiting ladies would gather in these retired nooks, and there would be much whispering of intimate domestic gossip. But we children had to be in bed by this time, and we lay listening as Piyari or Sankari told us stories—"The moonlight, expanding like an opening flower . . ."

A little before our day it was the fashion among wealthy householders to run troupes of actors. There was a great demand for boys with good voices to join these troupes. One of my uncles was patron of such a company. He had a gift for writing

plays, and was very enthusiastic about training the boys. All over Bengal professional companies were the rage, just as the fancy companies were in aristocratic circles. Troupes of players sprang up like mushrooms on all sides, under the leadership of some well-known actor or other. Not that either patron or manager was necessarily of high family or good education. Their fame rested on their own merits. Dramatic and musical performances used to take place in our house from time to time. But we children had no part in them, and I managed to see only the beginning of the preparations. The verandah would be full of members of the company, the air full of tobacco smoke. There were the boys, long-haired, with dark rings of weariness under their eyes, and, young as they were, with the faces of grown men. Their lips were stained black with constant betel chewing. Their costumes and other paraphernalia were in painted tin boxes. The entrance door was open, people swarmed like ants into the court-yard, which, filled to the brim with the seething, buzzing mass, spilled over into the Chitpore Road. Then nine o'clock would strike, and Shyam would swoop down on me like a hawk on a dove, grip my elbow with his rough, gnarled hand, and tell me that Mother was calling me to go to bed. I would hang my head in confusion at being thus publicly dragged away, but would bow to superior force and go to my bedroom. Outside all was tumult and shouting, outside flared the lighted chandeliers, but in my room the echoes were faint and muffled, and a brass lamp burned low on its bracket. Even in sleep I was dimly conscious of the steady rhythm of the cymbals beating in the intervals of the dance.

The grown-ups usually forbade everything on principle, but on one occasion for some reason or other they decided to be indulgent, and the order went forth that the children also might come to the play. It was a drama about Nala and Damayanti. Before it began we were sent to bed till halfpast eleven. We were assured again and again that when the time came we should be roused, but from repeated experience we had no faith

at all in these promises—*they* were grown-ups, and *we* were children !

That night, however, I did drag my unwilling body to bed. For one thing, Mother promised that she herself would come and wake me. For another thing, I always had to pinch myself to keep myself awake after nine o' clock. When the time came, I was awakened and brought outside, rubbing my eyes in the dazzling glare. Light streamed brightly from coloured lanterns on the first and second floors, and the white sheets spread in the courtyard made it seem much bigger than usual. On one side were seated the people of importance, members of the family, their invited guests. The remaining space was filled with a motley crowd of all who cared to come. The performing company was led by a famous actor wearing a gold chain round his waist, and old and young crowded together in the audience. The majority of the audience were what the respectable would call "riff-raff". The play itself had been written by men whose hands were accustomed only to the villager's reed pen, and who had never traced out the letters of an English copy book. Tunes, dances, and story had all sprung from the very heart of rural Bengal and no pundit had polished their style.

We went and sat by our older brothers in the audience, and they tied up small sums of money in kerchiefs and gave them to us. It was the custom to throw this money on to the stage at the points where applause was most deserved. By this means the actors gained some extra profit and the family a good reputation.

The night came to an end, but the play was endless. I never knew whose arms gathered up my unconscious body and carried me off. I was far too much ashamed to try to find out. I, a fellow who had been sitting like an equal among the grown-ups and doling out *baksheesh*, to be disgraced in this way before a whole courtyard full of people ! When I woke up I was lying on the divan in my mother's room, it was very late, and already blazing hot. The sun had risen, but I had not risen !—Such a thing had never happened before.

# GANDHIJI ON THE STATE

Nirmal Kumar Bose

IN many respects, Gandhiji's *Hind-Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, which was published in 1908, still remains a remarkable book. Even a few months ago, he wrote that in order to understand his ideas correctly, it was necessary to read that small book "with his eyes."

In that book, there is a chapter in which a comparison has been made between Italy and India ( Ch. XV ) ; and there we find the fundamentals of his conception of Swaraj or independence :

"If you believe that, because Italians rule Italy, the Italian nation is happy, you are groping in darkness. Mazzini has shown conclusively that Italy did not become free. Victor Emanuel gave one meaning to the expression ; Mazzini gave another. According to Emanuel, Cavour and even Garibaldi, Italy meant the King of Italy and his henchmen. According to Mazzini, it meant the whole of the Italian people, that is, its agriculturists. Emanuel was only its servant. The Italy of Mazzini still remains in a state of slavery. The working classes in that land are still unhappy. They therefore indulge in assassination ; rise in revolt, and rebellion on their part is always expected. What substantial gain did Italy obtain after the withdrawal of the Austrian troops ? The gain was only nominal. The condition of the people in general still remains the same. I am sure you do not wish to reproduce such a condition in India. I believe that you want the millions of India to be happy, not that you want the reins of Government in your hands. If that be so, we have to consider only one thing : how can the millions obtain self-rule ? You will admit that people under several Indian princes are being ground down. The latter mercilessly crush them. Their tyranny is greater than that of the English and, if you want such tyranny

in India, then we shall never agree. My patriotism does not teach me that I am to allow people to be crushed under the heel of Indian princes, if only the English retire. If I have the power, I should resist the tyranny of Indian princes just as much as that of the English. By patriotism I mean the welfare of the whole people, and if I could secure it at the hands of the English, I should bow down my head to them. If any Englishman dedicated his life to securing the freedom of India, resisting tyranny and serving the land, I should welcome that Englishman as an Indian."

In trying to define the ideal of Swaraj, Gandhiji wrote in Ch. XIV of the same book, "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. Such Swaraj has to be experienced by each one for himself."

It is clear from the above passages that Gandhiji wants a condition when all labouring people will feel that they are their own masters ; such a state alone is worthy of being called Swaraj. During the Non-co-operation Movement, Gandhiji objected to the use of violence, for he felt that even if India succeeded in driving out the English by violence, the condition of the masses would remain substantially unaltered. But if freedom came through non-violence, power would automatically come to the masses instead of to the classes. He wrote : "If it is steel that is to decide the issue, it must be not Sikh or Gurkha steel, it must be an all-India steel. If it is brute force that is to rule, then the millions of India must learn the art of war, or must for ever remain prostrate at the feet of him who wields the sword, whether he is *paradeshi* or *swadeshi*. The millions must remain 'dumb driven cattle'. Non-co-operation is an attempt to awaken the masses to a sense of their dignity and power. This can only be by enabling them to realise that they need not fear brute force." ( *Young India*, 1.12.20. )

Emphasising the fact that Swaraj was to be won both by and for the masses, he said, "The Swaraj of my dream recognises no race or religious distinction. Nor is it to be the monopoly of

the latter persons nor yet of monied men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving toiling millions." ( *Young India*, date ? )

"It is the masses who have to attain Swaraj. It is neither the sole concern of the monied men nor that of the educated classes. Both must *subserve* their interest in any scheme of Swaraj."\* ( *Young India*, 20. 4. 21. )

In the year 1925, there were several occasions when Gandhiji further elucidated his ideas regarding Swaraj, and in each of them, we find a development of the root-ideas contained in his *Hind Swaraj* of 1908. With reference to the violent revolutionary method, he wrote : "I contend that the revolutionary method cannot succeed in India. If an open warfare were a possibility, I may concede that we may tread the path of violence that the other countries have and at least evolve the qualities that bravery on the battlefield brings forth. But the attainment of Swaraj through warfare I hold an impossibility for any time that we can foresee. Warfare may give us another rule for the English rule, but not self-rule in terms of the masses. The pilgrimage to Swaraj is a painful climb. It requires attention to details. It means vast organising ability, it means penetration into the villages solely for the service of the villagers. In other words, it means national education, i. e. education of the masses. It means an awakening of national consciousness among the masses. It will not spring like the magician's mango. It will grow almost unperceived like the banian tree. A bloody revolution will never perform the trick." ( *Young India*, 21.5.25. )

In the opinion of Gandhiji, the condition of the masses in India as well as in Europe was substantially the same : "I feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country, the people enjoy political self-government. No mere transference of political power in India will satisfy my ambition, even though I

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\* *Italics ours.*



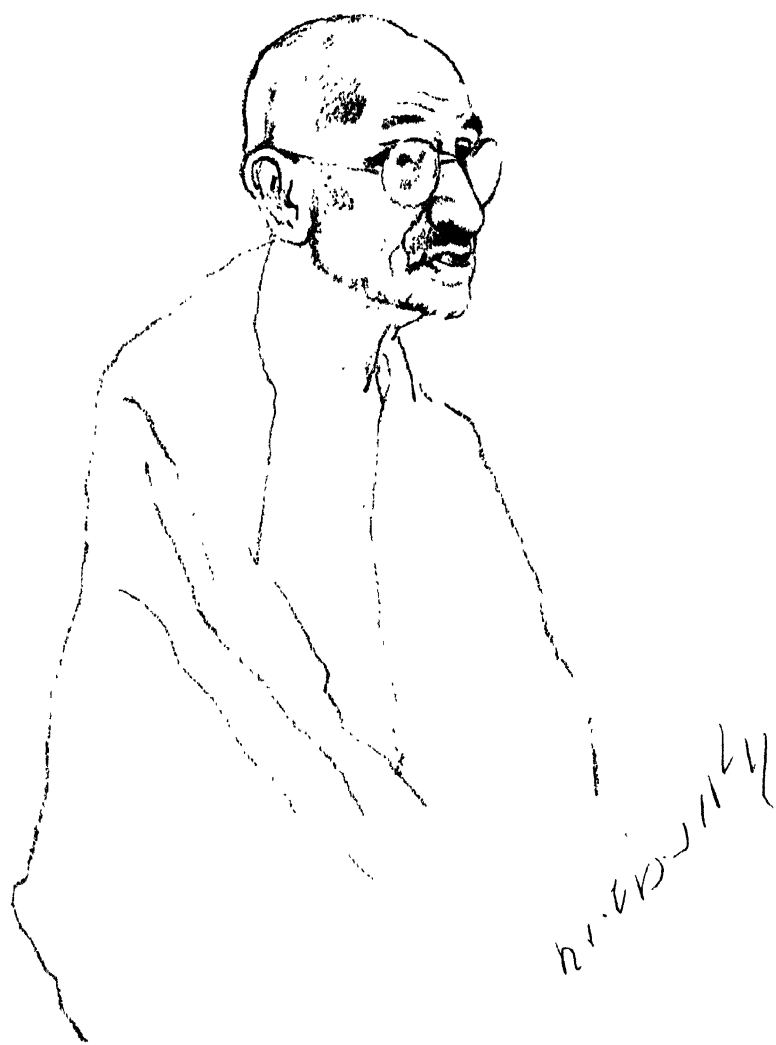
hold such transference to be a vital necessity of Indian national life. The people of Europe have no doubt political power but no Swaraj. Asian and African races are exploited for their partial benefit, and they, on their part, are being exploited by the ruling class or caste under the sacred name of democracy. At the root, therefore, the disease appears to be the same as in India." ( *Young India*, 3. 9. 25.)

In trying to clarify his concept of political independence, he wrote once more : "By Swaraj I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed *by manual labour*\* to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. I hope to demonstrate that real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority." ( *Young India*, 29. 1. 25. ) This did not however mean that Gandhiji had dropped his original ideal of anarchism. On one occasion during the same year, he maintained that, "Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life." ( *Young India*, 6. 8. 25. )

Summarising the views of 1925, it might be said that Gandhiji still believed that in the Swaraj of his ideal, people would rule themselves in such a way that there would be no need of any State. But as that was far away, he worked for the establishment of a State in which the working classes would feel that they were masters of themselves ; at least, through their chosen representatives. The real power was to lie with the

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\* Italics orig.



癸亥二月十七日下午三時半  
悲鴻



A pencil sketch of Mahatma Gandhi

By Ju P'ao



former. In short, the chief concern of the State was to be the interest of the toiling millions.

In the year 1924, Gandhiji had already tried to convert the Congress into a voluntary labourers' association by suggesting that those who spun and paid their subscription in yarn, could alone be its members. But the proposal had been summarily turned down in the Congress. Commenting upon this, he had written, "Had it been workmen who had been the most influential people and not capitalists or educated men and a property or an education test had been proposed, the powerful workmen would have ridiculed the suggestion and might even have called it immoral." (*Young India*, 27.11.24.)

Some amount of further development must have taken place in Gandhiji's mind between the years 1924 and 1928 with regard to the economic functions of the State; for we find him stating now that the control of the means of production should lie with the State, rather than with profiteering individuals. Evidently, this was due to the influence of socialistic thought. In answer to a question regarding machinery and its limitation, he had told an interviewer that he wanted the unavoidable heavy machinery to be either owned or controlled by the State. "Yes, but I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalised, or State controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive." (*Young India*, 13. 11. 24.) \*

Later on, in enunciating his economic ideal, he wrote : "According to me the economic constitution of India and for the matter of that the world should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realised only if the means of production of elementary

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\* See *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Nov. 1989, p. 245.

necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be ; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others." ( *Young India*, 15.11.28. )

The year 1931, that is the year of the Salt Satyagraha, as well as the succeeding period, seems to have been an active one so far as the development of Gandhiji's political ideas are concerned. Once more, he asserted his ultimate anarchistic ideal in the following terms. "To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state therefore there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realised in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that government is best which governs the least." ( *Young India*, 2.7.31. )

If we leave aside this anarchistic ideal and come down to practical issues, we find Gandhiji, as before, envisaging a State in which the interest of the masses would occupy the supreme position. The State was not to serve the interests of both the classes as well as the masses, but of the masses alone. The interests of the former were to exist to the extent they were compatible with the interests of the latter : "I may tell you that the Congress does not belong to any particular group of men ; it belongs to all, but the protection of the poor peasantry, which forms the bulk of the population, must be its primary interest. The Congress must, therefore, truly represent the poor. But that does not mean that all other classes—the middle classes, the capitalist or zamindar—must go under. All that it aims at is that all other classes must subserve the interest of the

poor.” ( *Young India*, 16.4.31. ) Again, he said : “I will therefore state the purpose. It is complete freedom from the alien yoke in every sense of the term, and this for the sake of the dumb millions. Every interest therefore, that is hostile to their interest, must be revised, or must subside if it is not capable of revision.” ( *Young India*, 17. 9. 31. )

When logically pursued, this was obviously going to mean that in a free India, confiscation of property would have to be ordered to a large extent. Gandhiji did not hesitate to say so at the Round Table Conference in London, with the result that both European and Indian rich men looked upon him as a veiled Bolshevik and the reaction against the Congress and its ideals hardened to a considerable extent.

He said : “I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the down-trodden, the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so-called higher classes, and then, subsequently and scientifically, by the British rulers. If we are to lift these people from the mire, then it would be the bounden duty of the National Government of India, in order to set its house in order, continually to give preference to these people and even free them from the burdens under which they are being crushed. And, if the landlords, zamindars, monied men and those who are today enjoying privileges—I do not care whether they are Europeans or Indians—if they find that they are discriminated against, I shall sympathise with them, but I will not be able to help them, even if I could possibly do so, because I would seek their assistance in that process, and without their assistance it would not be possible to raise these people out of the mire....

“From whose pockets are those grants to come ? Not from the pockets of Heaven. Heaven is not going to drop money for the sake of the State. They will naturally come from the monied classes, including the Europeans.

“It will be, therefore, a battle between the haves and

have-nots : and if that is what is feared, I am afraid the National Government will not be able to come into being if all the classes hold the pistol at the head of the dumb millions and say : you shall not have a government of your own unless you guarantee our possessions and our rights." ( *The Nation's Voice*, p. 71. )

In an interview given in 1934, Gandhiji practically repeated the same view with regard to the State, namely, that it should confiscate property if and when it is established that it is not being used by the rich for the welfare of the masses. He said that State-ownership was better than private ownership ; but at the same time he emphasised the fact that the voluntary method of equalization was better than the process of equalization brought about by the arm of the State. The power of the State should be decentralized to the utmost possible extent ; of course, consistent with the welfare of the masses.\*

On another occasion in the following year, while speaking about machinery, Gandhiji repeated how he wished that the unavoidable heavy machinery needed by a nation, should be held in common for the sake of the masses. This was to be done by the State, but preferably, by small village communities, which would function largely like autonomous units within the State. This would be nearer his ideal of Anarchism.

"Q. But what about the great inventions ? You would have nothing to do with electricity ?

"A. Who said so ? If we could have electricity in every village house, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures . . .

"I would prize every invention science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for the asphixiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of

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\* *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, May-June, 1940, pp. 80-88.

public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour, has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people." (*Harijan*, 22. 6. 35. )

Summarising Gandhiji's views on the State, we thus find that as a philosophical anarchist, he would have as little to do with it in human affairs as possible. He envisages an ideal condition when enlightened men would not need State-made laws to keep them on the right path. But as such a condition is humanly impossible of attainment at any point of time, we shall have to put up with a State to a more or less extent.

In that State, Gandhiji would wish to see the interest of the toiling millions as being its supreme concern. In fact, he would wish all men—except, of course, children and the aged and sick—to turn themselves voluntarily into manual labourers.\* Others may exist on sufferance ; but only so long as their interest does not clash with the interest of the masses.

Such a State would confiscate property if necessary, as well as hold or be in control of the means of production on behalf of the masses. Gandhiji would prefer this control or ownership to lie with smaller, decentralized units. Where it is unavoidable, it should lie with the State. But whether the possession lies with the State or its decentralized, more or less autonomous units, it must always be run for the common benefit of labouring humanity, never for the sake of private gain, nor for that of one particular section of humanity, marked off from the rest by racial or religious considerations.

Gandhiji believes that such a State can only be established by awakening the labouring classes into a sense of their power and dignity. This can only be achieved through non-violent non-co-operation and its corollary activities. Any other method may bring political power within the grasp of some party, but the

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\* Of. His letters from jail to the members of the Sabarmati Ashram in 1930, published under the title *From Yervada Mandir*, 2nd ed. 1935. Specially the chapters entitled *Bread-Labour*, *Non-possession* and *Non-stealing*.



masses will remain under the thumb of that party. Such a condition is not Swaraj for the masses. For if the party be wrong, and the masses are in a state of fear of violence, then who will check and guide the former ?

Thus Gandhiji's conception of the State is neither completely like that of the Anarchists, nor of the Communists. It approaches the former with regard to the aim on political and economic decentralization, and the latter in that the interest of the toiling millions will have a dictatorial position within the State.

The originality of Gandhiji's ideas is further enhanced by the fact that he suggests a means of non-violent non-co-operation, through which power to control the State will come, not to any party working on their behalf, but to the toiling millions directly. Non-violent non-co-operation can be successful only when the soldiers of non-violence learn to take the initiative into their own hands even when they find themselves alone and if they are prepared to lay down their lives without bitterness for an order in which there is no exploitation and no inequality, i. e. in a state where the idea of the essential unity of human interest prevails.

How far Gandhiji's plans and ideas are capable of practical realization, only the future can say.

# SURENDRANATH TAGORE\*

Rathindranath Tagore

WE are incapable of cold dispassionate judgment where our feelings are concerned ; and I find it therefore difficult to write about my cousin Surendranath, who was dearer to me than an elder brother of my own could have been. The wound caused by his death is still too fresh. Moreover, the difficult is rendered more so by the nature of Surendada's personality which was of that rare and sensitive kind which, though richly endowed, delights in obscurity. Only those who came very near to him felt the indefinable charm of a highly cultivated mind and realized the inimitable simplicity of a truly noble soul. His virtues were never concentrated in a full blaze so as to catch the public eye, but only shed their mellow radiance on those who happened to come within its radius. Of such a personality it is difficult to sketch an impression for those who never felt its direct impress. But I shall try.

Surendranath was the only son of his parents, a son much petted and guarded by a jealous mother, and should by all calculations have turned out a genuinely spoilt child. On the contrary, from his early youth he developed a remarkable feeling of consideration for others, which made him very popular amongst his kith and kin and later on won for him universal regard and respect. I cannot claim any knowledge of his boyhood days as the difference in age made me regard him more as an uncle than a brother—but in my earliest recollections I find him already enthroned as the favourite and the most popular

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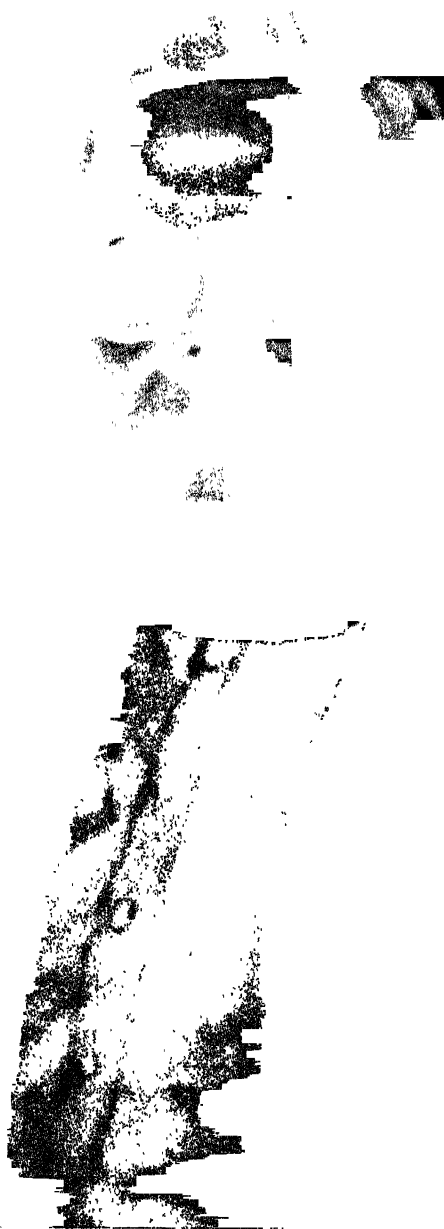
\* We of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* have reason to be grateful to the memory of Surendranath Tagore, to whom more than to any other individual, the journal owes its continued existence and whatever worth it has gathered during its career. He edited the first Series, and his close cooperation and guidance alone made the new Series possible. His loss to us is irreparable.—*Ed.*

amongst the younger generation in our very large family of first cousins. There is only one story of his schooldays which I happen to remember. It was told by Surendada himself and shows the characteristics of the boy as he was, when he was sent to the St. Xaviers School for his education. The Jesuit fathers were sometimes at a loss how to control the lively and quick-witted boy under their charge and in despair would sentence a few stripes when a particularly mischievous prank was detected. The boy would stand always with a smiling face, the palm of the right hand extended and the left hand in the pocket of his trousers to receive the punishment. After one or two stripes the right hand would be withdrawn into the pocket and the left hand take its place surreptitiously. He never minded this form of punishment because his pockets were liberally supplied with the rosen powder which applied to the palm would make the leather strap or cane rebound without hurting much !

I was still too young to appreciate the part taken by Surendada in the social life that centred around my uncle Satyendra-nath after he had retired and settled down in Calcutta, at first in Park Street and afterwards in various parts of Ballygunge. What used to be known and referred to, with perhaps a note of derision, as "Inga-Banga Samaj" ( Anglo-Bengali Society ) certainly had its headquarters at my uncle's house presided over with great brilliance by my aunt. Some of the sparkling conversations held at her salon have been preserved for all times in *Panchabbut*.\* One of the few cherished possessions of my father in those days was a decrepit fourwheeler "palki" carriage and an ancient horse of a horrible piebald colour. Not an afternoon passed when our family would not squeeze into this conveyance and lumber along the bumpy road to uncle's house. Macadam roads had not come into fashion then, nor electric lights. On the return journey at night weird thoughts used to pass through the mind of the

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\* By Rabindranath Tagore. An English translation by Surendranath Tagore, entitled "A Diary of the Five Elements", was published serially in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. II, Parts 2, 3, 4 ; Vol. III, Parts 1, 2, 3, 4.



SURENDRANATH TAGORE

From a  
Painting by Atul Bose



writer who as a kid would watch the mysterious trees and houses on both sides, and the succession of lengthening shadows between each gas-lit lamp, until fitful slumber would transform the scene into tales of sanguinary battles in which giants and demons had the principal parts.

Those who have read the reminiscences of father's early life will remember the ardent enthusiasm with which the cause of swadeshi business enterprises was taken up in the family long before the political movement gave it a fillip. Surendada fell an easy victim to this at an early age. Father had opened a factory at Kushtia for jute baling and sugarcane crushing mills. He took both Balendranath and Surendranath as co-partners to assist him in this business, which did not take many years to be wound up, leaving a heavy loss to be accounted for. We were at that time at Shelida, where Surendada used to visit quite often in connection with the Kushtia business. Father had asked him to prepare a concise edition of the *Mahabharata* in Bengali, keeping the main story portion intact. He used to be engaged day and night on this stupendous work but very often we would pester him to read from the copy and listen to it with enraptured attention. The book was subsequently published and has recently been further abridged under the title of *Kurupandava*.

One of the chapters in the history of our province which in all probability will remain unwritten and in which Surendada played an important part is the association of Sister Nivedita, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, Bipin Chandra Pal, Hem Chandra Mallick, father and a few others with Kakuzo Okakura.\* Much has been written and we all know the result of the impact of the British occupation on the development of the life of Bengal but very few realize the deep influence that the contact with the wonderful personality of this Japanese sage had on the recent history of this province. He came at a critical period, when the

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\* Readers may be interested to read the reminiscences of Kakuzo Okakura by Surendranath Tagore himself in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. II, Part, 2.—Ed.

reaction against Westernization had barely started. Through his conversations and through such books as *The Ideals of the East* he inspired the people to regain confidence in their own civilization and to believe in the great contribution that Asia had still to make to world culture. This brought about a silent revolution and oriented the minds of the intellectuals in Bengal towards a healthy nationalism which gradually penetrated the whole of India. Surendada got himself attached to Okakura and this gentleman developed such an admiration for his 'chela' that at the time of his departure he mentioned to his close friends that if ever India gained freedom Surendranath should be her first emperor.

After the hectic days of the Swadeshi movement, when the repressive steps taken by the government against the political agitation led the people to turn more attention to constructive work, Surendada, in conjunction with the late Ambika Ukil, an enthusiast in co-operatives, started the Hindusthan Co-operative Insurance Company. Father lent his newly built house, Lalbari, for the purpose and the company was inaugurated and the office established on the ground-floor of the Jorasanko house. Amongst the young men recruited for the staff was Sj. Naliniranjan Sarkar. I think it is needless for me to recount the development of this premier Indian insurance business and the future brilliant career of the young man whom Surendada took under his wing. The story has been made public by Sj. Naliniranjan himself and the tribute that he has paid to his guru is in the highest terms.

The co-operative principle introduced in the Hindusthan Insurance Company at its inception involved the company at a later stage in difficulties. Surendada was deputed to England to consult actuaries how to get over the commitments made under the co-operative scheme to shareholders with the least financial loss. This was in 1913 and we were still in London when he arrived. For many years father had been suffering from an acute ailment the only remedy for which lay in the hands of a surgeon. At this time he was in an extremely run-down condi-

tion and my wife and myself were at our wit's end how to persuade him to undertake the operation, because till then his faith in homoeopathy was unshaken and he would turn a deaf ear to the suggestion of any other treatment. Our appeal for help to Surendada at this critical stage immediately had effect, his wonderful persuasive power won, the operation was performed and father obtained a new lease of life.

Surendada used to give ungrudging help to many persons who came to him for drafting difficult letters, company reports and even legal documents. But until 1914 his literary abilities had remained unnoticed and even afterwards when he had translated, one after another, many of father's books, only a few amongst an intimate circle could pay the tribute due to him for his mastery over the difficult art of rendering literature from one language to another not his own, because he did not care to label the translations with his own name. Those who have come closely in touch with him and seen him work can testify to the wonderful ease and facility he had with his pen. I believe the first serious work he had undertaken was the translation of *Jibansmriti*.\* This piece of fine literary work probably still remains the best among his many translations.

Surendada led a busy life but I know even when worldly worries became unbearable he would still find leisure to devote some little time to literary work because that was the chief solace to a much harassed soul. For this reason he resolutely kept on editing *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* journal for many years although he could ill spare the time.

It is not for me to enumerate the many princely qualities of my cousin—it will suffice to mention that what attracted people towards him and won their respect and loyalty was his unassuming generosity of heart, genuine democratic feeling and friendly behaviour with everybody, and a wonderful toleration and consideration for others in spite of a keen logical mind. No

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\* The original Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore's *Reminiscences*.



words, however, could sum up the innate nobility of his character better than the following touching testimony by father who knew him so well and loved him so much.

“One of the noblest traits of Suren’s nature was his remarkable gift of forbearance even in the face of the most aggressive type of stupidity with which he often had to come into contact in the course of his business or in the daily traffic of his social relationship. He never for once lost his equanimity of mind in the presence of pretentious superciliousness of men who were far inferior to him in culture. Often we have seen him trying to find out some points of agreement with those who were fighting him even going to the length of putting their case in a rational mould which was his own. The mind which is unusually keen in intelligence is apt to produce acrid cynicism when the environment is unfavourable but Suren had an inexhaustible store of intellectual generosity which hated to take advantage of others’ weak points and offered them truce when it was easy to run them down.

“He had great opportunities before him when young but saw them wither one by one by a succession of misfortunes, which he endured but could not control. He was subjected to trials which would have turned a lesser man bitter and misanthropic, but Suren never lost the serenity of his mind and never in his life he complained against the unfairness of his destiny and its guides. This uncomplaining spirit of patience he carried all through the darkest days of adversity.

“Those of us who knew Suren knew that he was truly great but that which grieved us sorely is the unfortunate fact that he was content to allow his greatness to remain concealed in obscurity, helping others into eminence who he was sure would help his country and many others who were ungratefully merciless in their claims.”

## REVIEWS\*

*THE LIFE DIVINE*: by Sri Aurobindo—Published by the  
Arya Publishing House, Calcutta.

THE ancient dictum, "Ekamevadwityam," One without a second, relates to the Omnipresent Reality, the All-pervading Spirit, the Truth that underlies all life and existence. It is this Truth that is Brahman, besides whom nothing really exists. Everything in this universe, living or lifeless, embodied or body-less, whatever its state of existence, is but a manifestation of this eternal Spirit. *Om, Tat Sat*. This Spirit is not definable, for man can get no measure of it by means of any conception or experience known to him. The individual in trying to determine its connotation has perforce to stop at "Neti, neti"—not this, not that. So far, Sri Aurobindo is at one with the true Vedantin.

But what is the goal, the destiny, of the Individual? Is he to remain for ever knocking at the door of infinity and never comprehending it? Sri Aurobindo gives us the assurance,

"To fulfil God in life is man's manhood. He starts from the animal vitality and its activities, but a divine existence is his objective."

—Page 56.

This is to be achieved by an ever-growing comprehension. How far this progress is conscious is discussed later on. But, warns the Master, "however high we may climb, even though it be to the Non-Being itself, we climb ill if we forget the base." This is the crux of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, and differentiates it from extreme Monism. The world of matter is, to him, real and not illusory. The individual's connection with it can never cease. As man rises higher, the true divinity of his nature reveals itself in the way he transfigures the world around him by the light which illuminates himself. When ultimately he attains the nature of Brahman, he becomes, like Brahman itself, integral and all-embracing.

It would be interesting to cite here by analogy the spiritual evolution of Sant Tukaram. This great saint of Maharashtra was a Vaishnav to the core. His divinity was Sri Vithal, a manifestation of Vishnu. Tukaram starts life with the worship of a stone image of this deity. After years of tearful prayer and rigid asceticism, silent meditation and earnest exhortation, he succeeds in breathing life into his image and stands face to face with the bright effulgent form of his deity. But he cannot pause at this. The mere sight of his divinity does not satisfy him. He continues his austerities and prayers as earnestly as before. At times he weeps, anon he sulks and

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\* Continued from the previous Issue.

upbraids. The barrier between his Devata and himself is to him unbearable. At last Vithoba relents. One day Tuka perceives in his heart his own image blended with that of his beloved God. Vithal and Tuka are at last one. But even here the devotee cannot pause. He persists in his Sadhana till through his cherished deity he becomes one with the whole creation and attains beatitude.

Sri Aurobindo says, "Its (the liberated soul's) unity with the transcendent one is incomplete without its unity with the Cosmic Many."—Page 62.

Very aptly does the legend describe how Buddha paused at the doorway of Nirvana and looking back took the vow never to cross the threshold as long as there was a single soul on earth unredeemed.

The Srimad-Bhagwat tells us a very similar tale. When the fourth incarnation Narasinha after the destruction of the demon Hiranyakashipu offered salvation, Moksha, to the devoted Pralhad, the latter declined the offer saying that he had no desire to be liberated as long as there were so many miserable ones left undelivered in the world.

This, then, is the destiny of the individual. By the Ignorance, Avidya, he crosses beyond Death, and by the knowledge, Vidya, he enjoys Immortality. Ignorance is the sense of Multiplicity while Knowledge is the realisation of One-ness. It is only by a comprehension of both that we can enter the life of eternal bliss.

But this life of everlasting Ananda that Sri Aurobindo holds up before man is not one of extinction in any sense of the word. On the contrary, it is a life, as the great Chaitanya promised to his devotees, of love for the Lord and of service to His world. It should never be lost sight of that the great Yogi of Pondicherry, however much of his technique he may have derived from Sankaracharya, is no believer in Maya or illusion, but takes a firm stand on the reality of the material universe and characterises it as the Leela or manifestation of Brahman. In so far as the Master is a Leela-vadi he is rather at one with the great Vaishnava sages of the past and with Sri Ramakrishna of our own days. But still Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is not really incompatible with that of the ancient Monist. For the latter recognised two distinct kinds of Moksha or liberation of the soul. One he called Nirvana Moksha, which implied complete absorption in the Brahman and the cessation of all relationship with a creation which was illusory in its nature and which, for him, ceased to exist. But the other Moksha designated Nirmana was quite a different state. The liberated soul having bathed in the light of the Supreme acquired a new outlook and resumed his work in the universe on a higher plane. It was this Nirmana idea which we see highly developed later on in the Vaishnav literature of Bengal. The condition of the soul thus liberated can be considered analogous to the theo-

phanous state of ancient Greek philosophy. The individual, it must never be forgotten, is a necessary unit. His ultimate destiny is not extinction but illumination. For the manifestation of the Transcendent in the universe, the illumination of the individual is a necessity.

It has already been stated more than once that according to Sri Aurobindo everything in the universe is a manifestation of the Brahman and, as such, is real and not illusory in its nature. Diverse are the forms in which Nature appears to the individual, but when comprehension comes to him he realizes that it is all but one and that his relationship with it can never cease.

In the sixth chapter the Master thus reiterates man's real mission and his destiny in the universe:

"The ascent to the divine life is the human journey, the Work of works, the acceptable sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification of his existence."

It is for this purpose that out of the insignificant one-celled organism of the primeval earth has evolved the rational cultured human unit of to-day. Yet, how is the ascent to the divine Life to be achieved? We are assured that there is no real obstacle. On the contrary, the all-pervading Spirit itself wills it. The general course of evolution helps the individual along the first part of his journey without even his knowing it. But the last steps are climbed by man's conscious effort, by a "progressive awakening and self-enlargement." This effort constitutes the motive of all spiritual Sadhana. In chapter VI we have a remarkable presentation of this progress of the individual, which every reader should peruse carefully for himself. We give below an extract thereof which in a way summarises Sri Aurobindo's view of man's progressive enlightenment.

"The animal life emerging out of Matter is only the inferior term of his existence. The life of thought, feeling, will, conscious impulsion, that which we name in its totality Mind, that which strives to seize upon Matter and its vital energies and subject them to the law of its own progressive transformation, is the middle term in which he takes his effectual station. But there is equally a supreme term which Mind in man searches after so that having found he may affirm it in his mental and bodily existence. This practical affirmation of something essentially superior to his present self is the basis of the divine life in the human being."—Page 71.

But, one may ask, how is such a transmutation conceivable? By what magic can the individual of clay, subject to pain, sorrow and death, pass into the condition of deathless beatitude? Such transformation is possible because the individual is not different in essence from the Spirit

pervading the universe. In substance they are identical, being but manifestations of the one Reality. To understand this fully one has to realise not only the ascent of the individual but the descent of the Supreme. From the Vaishnavic point of view one has to comprehend both Krishna and Radha, the impatient call of the Divine flute as well as the maddening effect thereof on the Maid of Brindaban.

Sorrow and death, says Sri Aurobindo, "can only be the creation, positive in practical effect, negative in essence, of a distorting consciousness which has fallen from the total and unifying knowledge of itself into some error of division and partial experience." Redemption comes by the realisation of the universal in the individual. When this happens, apparent contradictions between joy and sorrow, good and evil, death and deathlessness, vanish in the light of a higher knowledge. Opposites are transmuted into something surpassing them. Says the Master, "Evolution has enabled man to appear in Matter and it is this evolution which will enable him progressively to manifest God in the body,—the universal Incarnation."

Man's rationalism, his imagination and his intuition have given him the power of conceiving a state of existence higher than his own and has planted in him the ambition of passing into that state. For thousands of years he has been trying to devise ways and means by which he can evade pain, sorrow and death, and attain to a condition of unending Bliss. He has had his successes and his failures, but the time is getting ripe for a general uplift of the race to a plane which has so far been visualised by but a fortunate few. This is Sri Aurobindo's conception of the law of evolution in its entirety.

C. C. Dutt.

### *A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LOWER INDUS BASIN ( SIND )*

in Parts I, II, III, by Professor Maneek B. Pithawala,  
B. A., B. Sc., L. C. P., G. F. S., D. Sc., with 27 plates of maps,  
graphs and diagrams ; Part I, price Rs. 5/-, Part II,  
price Rs. 2/8/-, Part III, price Rs. 3/-. Available  
from the Author, at Victoria Road, Karachi.

THIS valuable book of research in the geography of Sind, originally appeared as articles in the *Journal of the Sind Historical Society* ( Vol. II, Part I ), *Proceedings of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore* ( Vol. IV, No. 4, Vol. VI, No. 1 ), and in the *Journal of the University of Bombay* ( Vol. V, Part 4 ). The University of Bombay, in appreciation of the

original research work done by Prof. Pithawala, has recently conferred the degree of Doctor of Science on the learned author.

The geography of Sind was a much neglected subject before Prof. Pithawala took up the subject, and now, thanks to him, the geography of Sind becomes such an interesting and instructive matter to read. The vast amount of data, published, we believe, for the first time, and the numerous plates of maps and graphs bespeak not only years of patient study but also the zest and interest of a pioneer. We feel certain that Prof. Pithawala's geographical researches will prove of very great assistance to the Sind Government. The learned author has done a distinct service to the "Unhappy Valley of the Indus", in bringing out this rare book, the first of its kind, in historico-geographical research.

We look forward with great interest to the other publications of Prof. Pithawala on similar subjects.

A. B. Advani.

*PHILOSOPHY OF THE SELF* or A System of Idealism based  
upon *Advaita Vedanta*—by G. R. Malkani, M. A. ( Director,  
Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner )—Published by  
the Institute, 1939.

THIS book, consisting of thirteen chapters, embodies the lectures that the author delivered at the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, from time to time during the year 1938-39. He states in the Preface his own philosophical standpoint as that of the *Advaita Vedanta*, and he has endeavoured to present in an expository manner the position of the system regarding the ultimate nature of Reality as the *Self*. Hence the name of the work given as the *Philosophy of the Self*. The method of exposition and defence adopted is mainly that of the Idealistic system of thought in the West, although he has been careful to point out the differences and difficulties in the ultimate findings of the latter schools. The discussions undertaken are no doubt preeminently rationalistic. But the learned author has not hesitated to point out where reason fails to yield ultimate truth about the nature of reality. Reason, he appears to assert, renders but negative help in our pursuit of knowledge of this truth, the apprehension of which is possible positively only by higher intuition which Acharya Sankara calls *Aparoksa*. This is all right from the standpoint of the Advaita School of Vedanta. But it was expected in a work of the kind, and particularly from the method of exposition adopted, that the author would throw some light on the nature of this Intuition and its *modus operandi* in yielding the particular knowledge for which it is held to

be the only possible source. The author does not appear to have handled this question properly anywhere in the course of his lectures embodied in the work. The want of this explanation leaves one to wonder whether the conclusion he comes to, or the position he advocates, is not after all a dogmatic assertion of his personal *faith*. He has no doubt expressed this attitude of his mind in the last sentence with which he concludes the Preface : "A little credulity, which I like to call a spirit of faith and of humility, has sometimes a greater truth-value than carping criticism." That is all right. But why then the elaborate discussions he has undertaken in the book on various subjects considered to be directly or indirectly connected with the fundamental problem he has ultimately to settle ? The only possible reply from a staunch follower of the dialectic of Sankara like himself, would, no doubt, be that all these argumentations on rationalistic lines are simply meant for the removal of *ajñāna* ( ignorance ) regarding the ultimate nature of reality. But can this negative attitude alone satisfy a seeker of truth ? The author knows that better than a mere reader could possibly do. What would strike a reader, like the present reviewer, is the free indulgence into subtilities in the mode of argumentation adopted in several places in the course of the writing, particularly in the Introduction and the earlier chapters, in which he appears to surpass a Bradleian of the West, and a follower of Sriharsa or of Madhusudana of the Advaita School of the East. I wish the author could have avoided these 'inconclusive' subtilities in the presentation of the main issues. It is admitted, that would not have been quite 'philosophical.' But has he not stated himself by implication that an approach to ultimate reality lies beyond the usual path of philosophical discussions ? The author has no doubt taken honest pains to assert and justify what his own convictions are. But then the work in which he embodies his views should have been undertaken more illucidatively to make the writing intelligible to the readers of the work. In making this general remark I do not, however, mean to say that the book is unintelligible throughout. There are chapters which are written clearly, and the subjects treated therein are handled admirably. It is only at knotty places that the argumentation is found to be rather too subtle, and, I am afraid, not quite free from inconsistencies. On the whole, however, the book appears to be, in its methods of presentation, a new approach to a most difficult problem and a new way of its solution. The exposition attempted covers an extensive ground, bringing in subjects, which are, more or less, directly or indirectly, connected with the main problem.

# The Visva-Bharati Quarterly

Vol. VI, Part III, New Series

Nov. 1940—Jan. 1941

## CONTENTS

Atonement ( Poem )	Rabindranath Tagore	185
My Boyhood Days	Rabindranath Tagore	187
What might Hinayana Buddhists learn from Christianity ?	Prof. James B. Pratt	225
Festival of Lights ( Poem )	Sarojini Naidu	234
The Idealism of Mahatma Gandhi	Dr. P. T. Raju	235
Four Poems	Rabindranath Tagore	244
Khaqani's Poetry	Prof. Hadi Hasan	248
Before the Sun Rises ( Poem )	A. Aronson	260
Why Khadi	S. N. Mozumdar	265
Reviews		273

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Study of a Pig	By Ju Péon	Frontispiece
Pencil Sketch of Dwijendranath Tagore	By Jyotindranath Tagore	Facing page 208
Landscape	By Rabindranath Tagore	Facing page 244





# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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November

New Series, Vol. VI, Part III

1940

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## ATONEMENT\*

OVERHEAD the array of electric lights . . .  
and beneath  
in this hell of civilization  
—where in the bowels of subterranean darkness  
they amass looted wealth,  
and the starving and the sleek overfed  
struggle in a mortal clash—  
the poison of evil corrodes the dense air.

The earth rocks in this over-heat of passion  
and the foundation gapes wide  
of the temples of triumph.  
The store-house where they hoard their stolen gold  
crumbles into the dust.

And there in the barbarous caves  
the snakes of doom  
are rudely roused from slumber.  
Their expanded hoods sway ominous  
and their venomous fangs  
hiss forth ruin and fire.

Let mad confusion squander away  
the iniquitous heap of greed.  
Let the sore burst in one painful instant  
and vomit out its pus of ignominy.  
Let the vulture with its murderous claws

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\* Translated from the original Bengali poem (in *Nabajatak*—1940) by Kshitish Roy.

tear the breast of the earth—  
who knows its nails may blunt by use one day !

At the feast of power today  
the cannibals are quarrelling  
over human sacrifice ;  
today the face of the earth  
is smeared with gory red.  
But time comes  
when out of this orgy of devastation  
heroic peace will emerge victorious.  
Let flames lick up everything unholy,  
every evil, every weakness  
and burn them into ashes.  
I shall stand firm facing all,  
nor shall I doubt ever !

In vain do the band of comfort-lovers  
visit the temple of the Lord  
to dupe Him with honeyed falsehood.  
The faint-hearted,  
they hope to bring peace to the world  
with their cringing prayers.  
While insatiate desires rankle their bosom,  
they hope to buy indulgence  
by chanting their scriptures.

Poor fools, they do not know  
if any strength remains in righteousness  
there will be a terrible reckoning  
—an atonement for all our yesterdays.

And then the morrow will come  
and bring a new life to a new land  
bright with a new lustre.

*Rabindranath Tagore*

## MY BOYHOOD DAYS\*

Rabindranath Tagore

NOWADAYS the city's pleasures flow on like a full river, without a moment's pause. At any hour of the day there is a cinema show somewhere, and whoever pleases may see it for a trifling sum. But in those days entertainments were few and far between, like water holes dug in the sandy bed of a dried up river, three or four miles apart. Like these too they lasted only a few hours, and the wayfarers hastily gathered round, drinking from their cupped hands to quench their thirst.

The old days were like a king's son who, from time to time on festive occasions, or according to his whim, distributes rich and royal gifts to all within his jurisdiction. Modern days are like a merchant's son, sitting at the cross-roads on some great highway with many kinds of cheap and tawdry goods spread glittering before him, and drawing his customers by highway and byway from every side.

Brajeswar was the head-servant, and his second-in-command was called Shyam. He came from Jessore, and he was a real countryman, speaking in a dialect strange to Calcutta. He would say "tenārā" and "ōnārā" for "tārā" and "ōrā", "jāti" and "khāti" for "jetē" and "khetē", "mugīr" and "kulīr" for "mugēr" and "kulēr". Our family "affection" name for him was "Dormani". He had a dark skin, big eyes, long hair glistening with oil, and a strong, well-built body. Endowed by nature with a rough exterior, he was really good at heart, and especially fond of children. He used to tell us stories of dacoits. Dacoity stories filled men's houses then as universally as the fear of ghosts filled their minds. Even today dacoity is no rare thing; murder, assault and looting do take place, and the police do not always catch the right man. But the facts are before us in our newspapers, and it has none of the fascination of romance. In those days dacoities were woven into stories, and passed from mouth to mouth for long periods. In my childhood men were still to be met with who in their prime had been members of dacoit

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\*Continued from the previous number.

gangs. They were all past-masters in the science of the *lathi*, and were surrounded by disciples eager to learn the art of single-stick. Men made reverent obeisance at the very mention of their names. Dacoity then was usually not a mere matter of rash, headstrong bloodshed. Bodily strength and skill was needed for it, and a generous, gallant mind. Moreover, gentlemen's houses often contained an exercise-ground for the practice of *lathi-fighting*, and those who made a name on these grounds were acknowledged as masters even by dacoits, who gave them a wide berth. Many zemindars made a profession of dacoity. There was a story of a man of this class who had stationed his gang at the mouth of a river. It was new moon, and poojah night, and when his desperadoes returned, carrying a severed head to the temple in honour of Kali Kankali,\* the zemindar struck his forehead wildly and cried out, "What have you done? My son-in-law!"

We heard also about the exploits of the dacoits Raghu and Bishu. They used to give notice before they attacked, and they committed no other crime than dacoity. When their rallying-cry was heard in the distance, the blood of the villagers ran cold. But their code forbade them to lay hands on women, and the story ran that on one occasion a woman had advanced to confront them in the guise of Kali, a sacrificial knife upheld in her hand; and by her presence-of-mind had not only saved her household, but received the devout offerings of the dacoits into the bargain.

One day there was a display of dacoits' wrestling feats in our house. They were all strong young fellows, big-made, dark-skinned, and long-haired. One man tied a cloth round a heavy grain-pounder, seized the cloth in his teeth, and then flung the pounder upwards and backwards so that it landed on his back. Another invited men to grasp him by his shaggy hair, and then whirled them round and round by a mere turn of his head. Using a long pole as support and lever, they leaped up to the

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\* The destructive aspect of the goddess Kali, pictured with a necklace of skulls.

second storey. Then one man stood with his hands clasped above his bent head, and others shot through the aperture like diving birds. They also showed how it was possible for them to manage a dacoity twenty or thirty miles away, and the same night be found sleeping peacefully in their beds like law-abiding citizens. They had a pair of very long poles with a piece of wood lashed cross-wise in the middle of each as a foot-rest. These poles were called stilts. When walking with the tops of the poles held in the hands, and the feet on these foot-holds, one stride had the value of ten ordinary steps, and a man could go faster than a horse. I used to encourage boys of former generations at Santiniketan to practise stilt-walking—though without any idea of committing dacoity ! With such a picture of dacoity feats mingling in my mind with Shyam's stories, how often have I spent the evening with my arms huddled against my pounding heart !

Sunday was a holiday. On the previous evening the crickets were chirping in the thickets outside in the south garden, and the story was about Raghu the highwayman. My heart went pit-a-pat in the dim light and flickering shadows of the room. The next day in my holiday leisure I climbed into the palanquin. It began to move unbidden, its destination unknown, and my mind, enthralled still by the magic of the previous night's romance, knew a thrill of delicious fear. In the silent darkness my pulses attuned themselves to the rhythmic chant of the bearers, and my body trembled with excitement. . . .

On the boundless expanse of plain the air quivers in the heat, in the distance glistens the tank of the Kali temple ; the sand sparkles ; the wide-spreading *pakur* tree leans from the bank of the river over the cracked, ruined *ghat*. My romance-fed terrors become concentrated on the thick clump of reeds standing below the tree on that unknown plain. Nearer and nearer we approach, quicker and quicker beats my heart. Above the reeds can be seen the tips of one or two stout bamboo staves. The bearers will stop there to change shoulders. They will drink, and wind wet towels round their heads. And then ? . . . .

Then with a blood-curdling shout, the dacoits are upon us. . . .

.. ..

From morning till night the mills of learning went on grinding. To wind up this creaking machinery was the work of *Shejdādā*\*—Hemendranath. He was a stern taskmaster, but it is of no use now to hide the fact that the greater part of the cargo with which he sought to load our minds was tipped out of the boat and sent to the bottom. My learning at any rate was a profitless cargo.

*Shejdādā* made all arrangements for the education of his eldest daughter. When the time came he got her admitted into the Loreto Convent School, but even before that she had become proficient in Bengali. He also gave Protibha a thorough training in western music, which, however, did not cause her to lose her skill in Indian music. Among the gentlemen's families of that time she had no equal in Hindustani songs.

It is one merit of western music that its scales and exercises demand diligent practice, that it makes for a sensitive ear, and that the discipline of the piano allows of no slackness in the matter of rhythm.

Meanwhile she had learnt Indian music from her earliest years from our teacher Vishnu. In this school of music I also had to be entered. No present-day musician, whether famous or obscure, would have consented to touch the kind of songs with which Vishnu initiated us. They were the very commonest kind of Bengali folk songs. Let me give you a few examples :

“A gypsy lass is come to town  
 To paint tattoos, my sister.  
 The painting's nothing, so they tell,  
 Yet she on me has cast a spell,

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\* Third elder brother

And makes me weep and mocks me well,  
By her tattoos, my sister."

I remember also a few fragmentary lines, such as :

"The sun and moon have owned defeat,  
the firefly's lamp lights up the stage ;  
The Moghul and the Pathan flag,  
the weaver reads the Persian page."

and :

"Your daughter-in-law is the plantain tree,  
Mother of Ganesh, let her be.—  
For if but one flower should blossom and grow  
She will have so many children you  
won't know what to do."

Lines too come back to me in which one can catch a glimpse of old forgotten histories :

"There was a fawning, footlicking cur,  
Cut through the jungle of thorn and burr,  
Built him a throne. . . ."

The modern custom is first to practise scales—*sā-re-ga-ma*, etc., on the harmonium, and then to teach some simple Hindi songs. But the wise supervisor who was then in charge of our studies understood that boyhood has its own childish needs, and that these simple Bengali words would make themselves a place in our minds much more easily than Hindi speech. Besides this, the rhythm of this folk music did not need accompaniment by drums and instruments. It danced itself into our very pulses. The experiment thus made showed that a child learns his first enjoyment of literature from his mother's nursery rhymes, and his first enjoyment of music from the same source.

The harmonium, that bane of Indian music, was not then in use. I practised my songs with my *tambura* resting on my shoulder, I did not subject myself to the slavery of the keyboard.



It was no one's fault but my own, that nothing could keep me for many days together in the beaten track of learning. I strayed at will, filling my wallet with whatever gleanings of knowledge I chanced upon. If I had been disposed to give my mind to my studies, the musicians of these days would have had no cause to slight my work. For I had plenty of opportunity. As long as my brother was in charge of my education, I repeated Brahmo songs with Vishnu in an absent-minded fashion. When I felt so inclined I would sometimes hang about the doorway while my brother was practising, and pick up the song that was going on. Once he was singing to the *Behag* air, "O thou of slow and stately tread." Unobserved I listened and fixed the tune in my mind, and astounded my mother—an easy task—by singing it to her that evening. Our family friend Srikantha Babu was absorbed in music day and night. He would sit on the verandah, rubbing *chameli* oil on his body before his bath, his *hookah* in his hand, and the fragrance of amber-scented tobacco rising into the air. He was always singing, and we boys were always attracted to listen. He never *taught* us songs, he simply sang them, and unconsciously I picked them up. When he could no longer restrain his enthusiasm, he would stand up and dance, accompanying himself on the *sitar*. His big expressive eyes shone with enjoyment, he burst into song and would not rest content till I joined in too.

In matters of hospitality, people kept open house in those days. There was no need for a man to be intimately known before he was received. There was a bed to be had at any time, and a plate of rice at the regular meal times for any who chanced to come. One day, for example, one such stranger guest, who carried his *tambura* wrapped in a quilt on his shoulder, opened his bundle, sat down, and stretched his legs at ease on one side of our reception room, and Kanai the *hookah*-tender offered him the customary courtesy of the *hookah*.

*Pān* and tobacco each played an equally great part in the reception of guests. In those days the morning occupation of

the women in the inner apartments consisted of preparing piles of *pan* for the use of those who visited the outer reception room. Deftly they placed the lime on the leaf, smeared catechu on it with a small stick, and putting in the appropriate amount of spice folded and secured it with a clove. This prepared *pan* was then piled into a brass container, and a moist piece of cloth, stained with catechu, acted as cover. Meanwhile, in the room under the staircase outside, the stir and bustle of preparing tobacco would be going on. In a big earthenware tub were balls of charcoal covered with ash, the pipes of the *hookahs* hung down like the snakes of *Nagalok*, the scent of rosewater in their tubes. This amber scent of tobacco was the first welcome extended by the household to those who climbed the steps to visit the house. Such was the invariable custom then prescribed for the fitting reception of guests. That overflowing bowl of *pan* has long since been discarded, and the caste of *hookah*-tenders have thrown off their liveries and taken to the sweetmeat shops, where they knead up three-day-old "*sandesb*" and re-fashion it for sale.

That unknown musician stayed for a few days, just as he chose. No one asked him any questions. At dawn I used to drag him from his mosquito curtains and make him sing to me. (Those who have no inclination for regular study find irregular study a luxury!) The morning melody of *Bansi hamari re . . . .* would rise on the air. We would never have dreamed of receiving payment for our hospitality, yet this repaid us beyond measure.

After this, when I was a little older, a very great musician called Jadu Bhatta came and stayed in the house. He made one big mistake in undertaking to teach me music, and consequently no teaching took place. Nevertheless, I did casually pick up from him a certain amount of stolen knowledge. I was very fond of the song "The dancing music of the rain today," which was set to a *Kafi* tune, and which remains to this day in my store of rainy season songs. But unfortunately just at this time another

guest arrived without warning, who had a name as a tiger-hunter. A Bengali tiger-hunter!—*that* was a real marvel, and it followed that I remained captivated in his room for the greater part of the time. I realise clearly now what I never dreamed of then, that it was to satisfy our persistence and give us the thrill we expected that he brought out his stories, and that the tiger whose fell clutches he described, had in point of fact never touched him at all. But in those days I busied myself eagerly in the liberal provision of *pan* and tobacco for this hero, and the distant strains of *kanara* music fell faintly on my indifferent ears.

So much for music. In other studies the foundation provided by *Shejdada* was equally generously laid. It was the fault of my own nature that no great matter came of it. It was with people like me in view that Ramprosad Sen wrote, "O Mind, you do not understand the art of cultivation." With me, the work of cultivation never took place. But let me tell you of a few fields where the ploughing at least was done.

I got up while it was still dark and practised wrestling—on cold days I shivered and trembled with cold. In the city was a celebrated one-eyed wrestler, who gave me practice. On the north side of the outer room was an open space known as the "granary." The name clearly had survived from a time when the city had not yet completely crushed out all rural life, and a few open spaces still remained. When the life of the city was still young our granary had been filled with the whole year's store of grain, and the *ryots* who held their land on lease from us brought to it their appointed portion. It was here that the lean-to shed for wrestling was built against the compound wall. The floor had been prepared by digging and loosening the earth to a depth of about a cubit and pouring over it a maund of mustard oil. It was mere child's play for the wrestler to try a fall with me there, but I would manage to get well smeared with dust by the end of the lesson, when I put on my shirt and went indoors.

Mother did not like to see me come in every morning so

covered with dust—she feared that the colour of her son's skin would be darkened and spoiled. As a result, she occupied herself on holidays in scrubbing me. ( Fashionable housewives of today buy their toilet preparations in boxes from western shops ; but then they used to make their unguent with their own hands. It contained finely ground nuts, cream, the rind of oranges and many other things which I forget. If only I had learnt and remembered, I might have set up a shop and sold it as “Begum Bilash” unguent, and made at least as much money as the *sandesh-wallabs*. ) On Sunday mornings there was a great rubbing and scrubbing on the verandah, and I would begin to grow restless to get away. Incidentally a story used to go about among our school fellows that in our house babies were bathed in wine as soon as they were born, and that was the reason for our fair European complexions.

When I came in from the wrestling ground I saw a Medical College student waiting to teach me the lore of bones. A whole skeleton hung on the wall. It used to hang at night on the wall of our bedroom, and the bones swayed in the wind and rattled together. But the fear I might otherwise have felt had been overcome by constantly handling it, and by learning by heart the long, difficult names of the bones.

The clock in the porch struck seven. Master Nilkamal was a stickler for punctuality, there was no chance of a moment's variation. He had a thin, shrunken body, but his health was as good as his pupil's, and never once, unluckily for us, was he afflicted even by a headache. Taking my book and slate I sat down before the table, and he began to write figures on the blackboard in chalk. Everything was in Bengali, arithmetic, algebra and geometry. In literature I jumped at one bound from *Sītār Banabās*<sup>1</sup> to *Meghnādbadh Kābya*.<sup>2</sup> Along with this there

1. “Sita in the Forest,” by Iswarchandra Vidyāsāgar.

2. An Epic on the death of Meghnād ( son of Rāvana in *Rāmāyana* ) by Michael Madhusudan Dutta.

was natural science. From time to time Sitanath Datta would come, and we acquired some superficial knowledge of science by experiments with familiar things. Once Heramba Tattvaratna, the Sanskrit scholar, came ; and I began to learn the Mugdhabodh Sanskrit grammar by heart, though without understanding a word of it.

In this way, all through the morning, studies of all kinds were heaped upon me, but the greater the burden, the more did the mind within contrive little by little to shift it ; making a hole in the enveloping net, my imagination slipped through its meshes and escaped—and the opinion that Master Nilkamal formed of his pupil's intelligence was not of the kind to be made public.

In another part of the verandah is the old tailor, his thick-lensed spectacles on his nose, sitting bent over his sewing, and ever and anon, at the prescribed hours, going through the ritual motions of his prayers. I watch him and think what a lucky fellow Niamut is. Then, with my head in a whirl from addition sums, I shade my eyes with my slate, and looking down see in front of the entrance porch Chandrabhān the *durwan* combing his beard with a wooden comb, dividing it in two and looping it round each ear. The assistant *durwan*, a slender boy, is sitting near by, a bracelet on his arm, and cutting tobacco. Over there the horse has already finished his morning allowance of gram, and the crows are hopping round pecking at the scattered grains. Our dog Johnny's sense of duty is aroused and he drives them away barking.

I had planted a custard-apple seed in the dust which continual sweeping had collected in one corner of the verandah. I watched eagerly for the sprouting of the new leaves. As soon as Master Nilkamal had gone, I had to run and examine it, and water it. In the end my hopes went unfulfilled—the same broom that had gathered the dust together dispersed it again to the four winds.

Now the sun climbs higher, and the slanting shadows cover only half the courtyard. The clock strikes nine. Govinda,

short and dark, with a dirty yellow towel slung over his shoulder, takes me off to bathe me. Promptly at half past nine comes our monotonous, unvarying meal—the daily ration of rice, *dal* and fish curry—I cannot say that I enjoyed it.

The clock strikes ten. From the main street is heard the hawker's cry of "Green mangoes"—what wistful dreams it awakens! From further and further away comes the music of the receding brass-peddler, striking his wares till they ring again. The lady of the neighbouring house in the lane is drying her hair on the roof, and her two little girls are playing with shells. They have plenty of leisure, for in those days girls were not obliged to go to school, and I used to think how fine it would have been to be born a girl. But as it is, the old horse draws me in the rickety carriage to my Andamans, in which from ten to four I am doomed to exile.

At half past four I return from school. The gymnastic master has come, and for about an hour I exercise my body on the horizontal bar. He has no sooner gone than the drawing master arrives.

Gradually the rusty light of day fades away. The many blurred noises of the evening are heard as a dreamy hum resounding over the demon city of brick and mortar. In the study room an oil lamp is burning. Master Aghor has come and the English lesson begins. The black-covered reader is lying in wait for me on the table. The cover is loose; the pages are stained and a little torn; I have tried my hand at writing my name in English in it, in the wrong places, and all in capital letters. As I read I nod, then jerk myself awake again with a start, but miss far more than I read. When finally I tumble into bed I have at last a little time to call my own. And there I listen to stories—the king's son travels over a vast and trackless plain, but I never succeed in following him to the end.

When I see the roofs of modern houses, uninhabited by either men or ghosts, I realise vividly the change that has taken

place between those times and these. I have already mentioned how the spirit of the *bādām* tree had fled, unable to endure the modern atmosphere of excessive learning. On the cornice where rumour had it that he had rested his foot, the crows snatch and squabble over our discarded mango stones. And men too restrict themselves nowadays to the confined, boxed-in rooms of the lower storeys, and pass their time within four walls.

My mind goes back to the parapet-surrounded roof of the inner apartments. It is evening, and Mother has spread her mat and seated herself, with her friends gossiping round her. Their chatter has no need of authentic information, it is only a means of passing the time. There was then no regular supply of valuable and varied ingredients to fill the day, which was not, as now, a closely woven mesh, but like a net of loose texture, full of holes. And therefore, stories and rumours, laughter and jokes, circulated freely, both in the social gatherings of the men and in the women's assemblies. Among Mother's friends the first in importance was Braja Acharya's sister, who was called "Acharjini." She was the daily purveyor of news to the company. Almost every day she picked up, (or made up!) and brought with her, every item of fantastic, ominous news in the country. By this means expenditure on all ceremonies calculated to avert impending calamity or the evil eye, was greatly increased.

Into this assembly I imported from time to time my recently acquired book-learning. I informed them that the sun is nine crores of miles distant from the earth. From the second part of my "Easy-Reader" I recited a portion of the Ramayana of Valmiki himself, complete with Sanskrit terminations. Mother was no judge of the accuracy of her son's pronunciation, but the range of his learning filled her with awe, and seemed to her much more wonderful than the nine-crore mile journey of light. Who would have thought that any except Naradmuni himself could recite all these *slokas*?

This inner apartment roof was entirely the women's domain,

and had a close connection with the store room. The sun's rays fell full upon it, so it was used for preparing lemons for pickle. The women used to sit there with brass vessels full of *kalai* pulse, and while their hair was drying they made pulse-balls with their deft, quick fingers. The maid-servants who had washed the soiled linen came here to spread it in the sun, for the *dhoby* had little work in those days. Green mangoes were cut in slices and dried for *āmsi*. The mango juice gathered and thickened over black stone moulds of all sizes and all patterns.<sup>1</sup> A pickle of young jackfruit stood there to season in sun-warmed mustard oil. Catechu, scented with the fragrant screw-pine (কৈয়া) would be prepared with great care.

I had a special reason for remembering this item. When my school-master informed me that he had heard the fame of my family's screwpine catechu, it was not difficult to understand his meaning. What he had heard of, he wished to become acquainted with. So to preserve the good name of my family, I occasionally climbed secretly to the roof containing the screwpine catechu, and—what shall I say? “Appropriated” a little, sounds better than “stole”. For even kings and emperors may make “appropriations” when need arises, or indeed even if it does not, but vulgar “stealing” is punished by prison or impaling.

In the pleasant sunlight of the cold weather it was the family tradition for the women to sit on the roof gossiping, driving off crows and passing the time of day. I was the only younger brother-in-law in the house, the guardian of my sisters-in-law's “*āmsatta*”, and their friend and ally in many other trivial pursuits. I used to read to them from *Bangadhipa Parajaya*<sup>2</sup>. From time to time the duty of cutting up betel-nut would devolve on me. I could cut betel very finely. My sister-in-law would never admit that I had any other good quality, so much so that she even made me angry with God for giving me such a faulty appearance. But she found no difficulty in speaking in exaggerated fashion of

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1. This preparation is called *āmsatta*.

2. “The defeat of the king of Bengal.”



my skill in cutting betel. Therefore the work of betel-cutting used to go on at a fine pace. But for a long time now, for want of anyone to encourage me, the hand that was so skilled in fine betel-cutting has perforce busied itself in other fine work.

Amid all this women's work that went on on the roof there lingered the aroma of village life. These occupations belonged to the days when there was a pounding room in the house, when confectionery balls were made, when the maid servants sat in the evening rolling on their thighs the cotton wicks for the oil lamps, when invitations came from neighbours' houses to the ceremonies of the eighth day after birth. Modern children do not hear fairy stories from their mothers' lips, they read them for themselves in printed books. Pickles and chutney are bought from the Newmarket by the bottleful, each bottle corked and sealed with wax.

The stamp of a bygone village life was impressed likewise on the outer verandah (*chandimandap*) where the school was held. Not only the boys of the house, but those of the neighbourhood also, made there their first attempt to scratch letters on palm-leaves. It is certain that I too traced out my first laborious letters on that verandah, but though I have tried every device to recall to memory the child I then was, he still eludes me, as the remotest planet of the solar system may elude the telescope of the frustrated star-gazer.

The first thing I remember about reading after this is the terrible story of Shandamark Muni's school, and of the *avatār* Narasimha tearing the bowels of Hiranyakashipu; I think also that there was a lead-plate engraving of it in the same book—and I remember a few *slokas* of Chanakya dating from that time too.

My chief holiday resort was the unfenced roof of the outer apartments. From my earliest childhood till I was grown up, many varied days were spent on that roof in many moods and thoughts. When my father was at home his room was on the third floor. How often I watched him at a distance, from my hiding place at the head of the staircase. The sun had not yet

risen, and he sat on the roof silent as an image of white stone, his hands folded in his lap. From time to time he would leave home for long periods in the mountains, and then the journey to the roof held for me the joy of a voyage through the seven seas. Sitting on the familiar first floor verandah I had daily watched through the railings the people going about the street. But to climb to that roof was to be raised beyond the swarming habitations of men. When I went on to the roof my mind stepped proudly over prostrate Calcutta to where the last blue of the sky mingled with the last green of the earth; my eye fell on the roofs of countless houses, of all shapes and sizes, high and low, with the shaggy tops of trees between.

I would go up secretly to this roof, usually at midday. The midday hours have always held a fascination for me. They are like the night of the daytime, the time when the *Sannyāsi* spirit in every boy makes him long to quit his familiar surroundings. I put my hand through the lattice and drew the bolt of the door. Right opposite the door was a sofa, and I sat there in perfect bliss of solitude. The servants who were in charge of me had eaten their fill and become drowsy, and yawning and stretching had betaken themselves to sleep on their mats. The afternoon sunlight deepened into gold, and the kite rose screaming into the sky. The bangle-seller went crying his wares down the opposite lane. By and by his cry would penetrate to where the housewife lay with her loosened hair falling over her pillow, a maid-servant would bring him in, and the old bangle-seller dexterously kneaded the tender fingers as he fitted on the glass bangles that took their fancy. The hushed pause of that old-world midday is now no more, and the hawkers of the silent time are heard no longer. The girl who in those days had married status, nowadays has still not attained it, she is learning her lessons in the second class. Perhaps the bangle-seller runs, pulling a rickshaw, down that very lane.

The roof was like what I imagined the deserts of my books to be, blazing hot everywhere. A hot wind ran panting across

it, whirling up the dust, the blue of the sky paled above it. Moreover, in this roof desert I had discovered an oasis. Nowadays the pipe water does not reach the upper floors, but then it ran even up to the third floor rooms. Like some young Livingstone of Bengal, alone and unaided, I secretly sought and found a new Niagara, the private bathroom. I would turn on the tap, and the water would run all over my body. I then took a sheet from the bed and dried myself, looking the picture of innocence.

Gradually the holiday drew towards its close, and four struck on the gateway clock. The face of the sky on Sunday evenings was always very ill-favoured. There fell across it already the shadow of the coming Monday's gaping jaws, open wide to swallow it in dark eclipse. Below at last a search had been instituted for the boy who had given his guards the slip, for now it was tiffin time. This part of the day was a red-letter time for Brajeswar. He was in charge of buying the tiffin. In those days the shop-keepers did not make thirty or forty percent profit on the price of *ghee*, and in odour and flavour the tiffin was still unpoisoned. When we got them, we lost no time eating up our *kochuri*, *singāra*, or even *alu dom*. But such treats were rare. When the time came round and Brajeswar, with his crooked neck still further twisted, called to us, "Look *babu*, what I have brought you today", what was usually to be found in his cone of paper was merely a handful of fried groundnuts. It was not that I did not like this, but its attractiveness lay in its price. I never made the least objection, not even on the days when only sesamum *goja* came out of the palm-leaf wrapper.

The light of day begins to grow murky. Once more, with a gloomy spirit, I make the round of the roof. I gaze down at the scene below, where a procession of geese has climbed out of the tank. People have begun to come and go again on the steps of the *ghat*, the shadow of the banyan tree lengthens across half the tank, the driver of a carriage and pair is yelling at the pedestrians in the street.

In this way the days passed monotonously on. School claimed all the middle part of the day, and only fragments of time in the morning and evening slipped through its clutching fingers. As soon as I entered the class-room, the benches and tables forced themselves rudely on my attention, elbowing and jostling their way into my mind. They were always the same—stiff, cramping, and dead. In the evening I went home, and the oil lamp in our study-room, like a stern signal, summoned me to the preparation of the next day's lessons.

There is a kind of locust which takes the colour of the withered leaves among which it lurks unobserved. In like manner my spirit also shrank and faded among those faded, drab-coloured days.

Now and again there came to our courtyard a man with a dancing bear, or a snake-charmer playing with his snakes. Now and again the visit of a juggler provided some little novelty. ( Today the drums of the juggler and snake-charmer no longer beat in our Chitpore Road. From afar they have done obeisance to the cinema, and fled before it from the city. )

Games were few and of very ordinary kinds. We had marbles, we had what is called "bat-ball," a very poor distant relation of cricket, and there was also top spinning and kite-flying. All the games of the city children were of this same lazy kind. Football, with all its running and jumping about on a big field, was still in its overseas home. And so I was fenced in by the deadly sameness of the days, as though by an imprisoning hedge of lifeless, withered twigs.

In the midst of this monotony there played one day the flutes of festivity. A new bride came to the house, slender gold bracelets on her delicate brown hands. In the twinkling of an eye the cramping fence was broken, and a new person came into view from the magic land beyond the bounds of the familiar. I circled around her at a safe distance, but I did not dare to go near. She was enthroned in the place of honour, and I was only a neglected, insignificant child.

The house was then divided into two suites of rooms. The men lived in the outer, and the women in the inner apartments. The ways of the nabobs obtained there still. I remember how my elder sister was walking on the roof with the new bride at her side, and they were exchanging intimacies freely. As soon as I tried to go near, however, I brought reprimand on my head, for these quarters were outside the boundaries laid down for boys. I saw myself obliged to go back crest-fallen to my shabby retreat of former days. But the monsoon rain, rushing down suddenly from the distant hills, undermines the ancient banks in a moment, and that is what happened now. The new mistress brought a new regime into the house. The quarters of the bride were in the room adjoining the roof of the inner suite. That roof was under her complete control. It was there that the leaf plates were spread for the dolls' weddings. On such feast days, boy as I was, I became the guest of honour. My new sister-in-law could cook well, and enjoyed feeding people, and she welcomed my presence to satisfy this craving for playing the hostess. As soon as I returned from school some delicacy made with her own hands stood ready for me. One day she gave me shrimp curry with yesterday's soaked rice, and a dash of chillies for flavouring, and I felt that I had nothing left to wish for. Sometimes when she went to stay with relatives and I did not see her slippers outside the door of her room, I would go in a temper and steal some valuable object from her room, and lay the foundation of a quarrel. When she returned and missed it, I had only to make such a remark as "Do you expect *me* to keep an eye on your room when you go away? Am I a watchman?" She would pretend to be angry and say, "You have no need to keep an eye on the room. Watch your own hands." Modern women will smile at the *naïveté* of their predecessors who knew how to entertain only their own brothers-in-law, and I daresay they are right. People today are much more grown up in every way than they were then. Then we were all children alike, both young and old.

And so began a new chapter of my lonely Bedouin life on the roof, and human company and friendship entered it. Across the roof kingdom a new wind blew, and a new season began there. My brother Jyotidada played a large part in this change. At that time my father finally left our home at *Jorasanko*. Jyotidada settled himself into that outside third-floor room, and I claimed a little corner of it for my own.

No *purdah* was observed in my sister-in-law's apartments. That will strike no one as strange today, but it then sounded an unimaginable depth of novelty. A long time before that, when I was a baby, my second brother had returned from England to enter the Civil Service. When he went to Bombay to take up his first post he astonished the passers-by by taking off his wife with him before their very eyes. And as if it was not enough to take her away to a distant province, instead of leaving her in the family home, he made no provision for proper privacy on the journey. That was a terrible breach of propriety. Even the relatives felt as if the sky had fallen on their heads.

A style of dress suitable for going out was still not in vogue among women. It was this sister-in-law who first introduced the manner of wearing the *sari* which is now customary. Little girls had not then begun to wear frocks or let their hair hang in plaits. In our family the little ones used to wear the tight Rajput pyjamas instead of the traditional *sari*. When the Bethune School was first opened my eldest sister was quite young. She was one of the pioneers who made the road to education easy for girls. She was very fair, uniquely so for this country. I have heard that once when she was going to school the police detained her, thinking her in her Rajput dress to be an English girl who had been kidnapped.

I said before that in those days there was little familiarity or intimacy between adults and children. But Jyotidada's fresh new ideas cut right across all these old customs. I was twelve years younger than he, and that I should come to his notice in spite of such a difference in age is in itself surprising.

What was more surprising is that in my talks with him he never called me impudent or snubbed me. Thanks to this, I never lacked courage to hold and express my opinions. Today I live with children. I try all kinds of subjects of conversation, but I find them dumb. They are afraid to ask questions. They seem to me to belong to those old times when the grown-ups talked and the children remained silent. The self-confidence that doubts and questions is the mark of the children of the new age ; those of the former age are known by a meek and docile acceptance of what they are told.

A piano appeared in the terrace room. There came also modern varnished furniture from Bowbazar. My breast swelled with pride, as the cheap grandeur of the present day was displayed before eyes inured to poverty. At this time the fountain of my song was unloosed. Jyotidada's hands would stray about the piano as he composed and tried out tunes in various new styles, all very rapidly, and he would keep me by his side as he did so. Sometimes it was my work to set words to the tunes which he composed so plentifully.

At the end of the day a mat and pillow were spread on the terrace. Nearby was a thick garland of *bel* flowers on a silver plate, in a wet handkerchief, a glass of iced water on a saucer, and some *chhanchhi*\* *pan* in a bowl. My sister-in-law would bathe, dress her hair and come and sit with us. Jyotidada would come out with a silk *chaddar* thrown over his shoulders, and draw the bow across his violin, and I would sing in my clear treble voice. For God had not yet taken away the little voice that He had given me, and under the sunset sky my song rang out across the house-tops. The south wind came caressingly from the distant sea, the sky filled with stars.

My sister-in-law turned the whole roof into a garden. She arranged rows of tall palms on stands, and beside and around them jasmine, *gandharaj*, tube-roses, oleander and champak. She

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\* A kind of sweet *pan*.

considered not at all the possible damage to the roof—all three of us had the minds of visionaries, above such sordid matters.

Akshay Chaudhuri used to come almost every day. He himself knew that he had no voice, other people knew it even better. In spite of that the flow of his song stopped for nothing. His special favourite was the *Behag* mode. He sang with his eyes shut, so he did not see the expression on the faces of his hearers. As soon as anything capable of making a noise came to hand, he took it and turned it into a drum, beating it in happy absorption, biting his lips with his teeth in his earnestness. Even a book with a stiff binding would do very well. He was by nature a dreamy kind of man, one could see no difference between his working days and his holidays.

The evening party broke up, but I was always a boy who retired late. All went to lie down, I alone would wander about like a restless ghost. The whole district was steeped in silence. On moonlight nights the shadows of the lines of palm-trees on the terrace lay in dream-patterns on the floor. Beyond the terrace the top of the *Sishu* tree swayed and tossed in the breeze, and its leaves gleamed as they caught the light. But for some reason, what caught my eye more than anything was a squat room with a sloping roof, over the staircase of the sleeping house on the opposite side of the lane. It stood like a finger pointing for ever towards I knew not what.

It may have been one or two in the morning, when in the main street in front a wailing chant arose— *Bolō-Hari Hari-bōl*.<sup>1</sup>

It was the fashion then in every house to keep caged birds. I hated this, and the worst thing of all to me was the call of a *koel* imprisoned in a cage in some house in the neighbourhood. *Bouthakrun*<sup>2</sup> had acquired a Chinese Shama. From under its covering of cloth its sweet whistling rose continuously, a foun-

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1. Funeral chant of the Hindus.

2. Sister-in-law.



tain of song. Besides this there were other birds of all kinds, and their cages hung in the west verandah. Every morning a bird-seed and insect hawker provided the birds' food. Locusts came from his basket, and gram-flour for the grain-eating birds.

Jyotidada gave me serious answers in my difficulties but as much could not be expected from the women. Once *Bouthakrun* took a fancy for pet squirrels. I said it wasn't right, and she told me not to set myself up to be her teacher. That could hardly be called a reasoned reply, and consequently, instead of wasting time in bickering I privately set two of the little creatures free. After that too I had to listen to a certain amount of scolding, but I made no retort.

There was a permanent quarrel between us which was never made up, which was as follows.

There was a smart fellow called Umesh. He used to go the rounds of the English shops and buy up for an old song all their scraps, remnants and strips of many coloured silk, and make up women's garments from them with the addition of a bit of net and cheap lace. He would open his paper parcel and spread them carefully out before the eyes of the women, extolling them as "the very latest fashion." The women could not resist the attraction of such a *mantra*, but I disliked it all intensely. Again and again, unable to contain myself, I made known my objections, but all the answer I got was "Don't be cheeky." I told *Bouthakrun* plainly that the old-fashioned black-bordered white cloth, and the Dacca saris, were far better and more tasteful than these. I sometimes wonder, do modern brothers-in-law never protest when they see their *Boudidis* robed in these modern georgette saris, with their faces painted like dolls? Even *Bouthakrun* decked in Umesh's handiwork was not as bad as they are, for she was at least not so guilty of forgery in the matter of her complexion.

I was however always beaten by *Bouthakrun* in argument, because she would never deign to give a logical answer; and I was beaten too in chess, in which she was an expert.



033242

13th Sept  
1898  
Dwijendranath Tagore

A pencil sketch of Dwijendranath Tagore.

By Jyotirindranath Tagore.



As I have referred to Jyotidada I ought to say a little more about him, to make you better acquainted with him. To do that I must go back to rather earlier days.

He had to go very often to Shilaidah to see after the business of the zemindari. Once when he visited it for this purpose he took me also with him. This was quite contrary to custom in those days, in fact it was what people would have called "altogether *too* much". He certainly considered that this travelling away from home was a kind of peripatetic schooling. He realised that my nature was attuned to ramblings under the windy sky, that in such surroundings it drew its own nourishment from within. A little later, as the years passed, it was in Shilaidah that I grew to maturity.

The old indigo factory was still standing, with the river Padma in the distance. The zemindari office was on the ground floor, and our living quarters on the upper floor. In front of them was a very large terrace roof. Close alongside were great casuarina trees, which had increased in stature with the increasing prosperity of the indigo-trading sahebs. Today the noise and bustle of those sahebs' times has completely subsided. Where is now that steward, the indigo factory's "messenger of death"? Where the troop of bailiffs, loins girded up and *lathis* on shoulder? Where are the long tables spread in the dining hall, where the sahebs came in from their riding and turned night into day? The feasting reached its height, the dancing couples whirled round the room, the blood coursed madly through the veins in the swelling intoxication of champagne—and the "big men" never heard the cries of the unfortunate *ryots*, trudging the weary path of their punishment to the Headquarters Jail. All traces of those days have passed away, save one record alone—the two graves of two of the sahebs. The high casuarina trees bend and sway in the wind, and sometimes at midnight the grandsons and grand-daughters of the former *ryots* see the ghosts of the sahebs wandering in the deserted waste of garden.

Here I revelled in my solitude. I had a little corner room,

and my days of ample leisure were spacious as the wide-spreading terrace. Leisure in a strange and unknown country, unfathomable as the black water of some ancient tank. The "*bou-kotha-kou*"<sup>1</sup> calls incessantly, my fancy unweariedly takes wing. As time goes on my note-book is gradually filled with verses. They were like the blossoms of the mango-tree's first flowering in the month of *Magh*, destined like them to wither forgotten.

Whenever in those days a young boy, or still more a young girl, wrote five or six lines of verse in the fourteen syllable metre,<sup>2</sup> the wise critics of the country used to hail it as a unique and unparalleled achievement.

I saw in the newspapers the names of these girl-poets, and their verses also were published. Now their names have been blotted out from the canvas which once bore the record of their carefully constructed metres and crude rhymes, and the names of countless modern girls have appeared in their stead.

Boys are shyer and far more self-conscious than girls. I do not remember any young boy poet writing verse in those days, except myself. My brother's son, who was older than I, explained to me that if one poured words into a fourteen-syllable mould, they would condense into verse. I soon found for myself that this magic formula would work. And in my hands the lotus bloom of poetry blossomed within the fourteen-syllable mould, and the bees did not come to it in vain. The barrier between me and the poets was down, and from that time on I gradually destroyed it completely.

I remember how, when I was in the lowest class of the middle school, our superintendent Govinda Babu heard a rumour that I wrote poetry. He thereupon ordered me to write, thinking that it would redound to the credit of the Normal School. There was nothing for it but to write, to read my work before my class-mates, and to hear the verdict—"this verse is assuredly

1. Also called "*makwa-pako*", an Indian species of cuckoo. Both names are imitations of the call.

2. The common ballad metre of Bengal.

stolen goods.” The cynics of that day could not foresee that when I increased in worldly wisdom I should grow shrewd in stealing, not words but thoughts. Yet it is these stolen goods which are really of value.

I remember once composing a poem in the *Poyar* and *Tripodi* metres, in which I lamented that as I swam to pluck the lotus it floated further and further away on the waves raised by my own arms, and remained always out of reach. Akshay Babu took me round to the houses of all his relatives and made me recite it to them. “The boy has certainly a gift for writing,” they said.

*Bouthakrun's* attitude was just the opposite. She would never admit that I should ever make a success of writing. She would say contemptuously that I should never be able to write like Behari Chakravarty. I used to think despondently that even if I were placed in a far lower class than he, she would then be prevented from so disregarding her poor poet-brother-in-law's disapprobation of women's fashions.

Jyotidada was very fond of riding. He even used to take *Bouthakrun* riding along Chitpore Road to the Eden Gardens. In Shilaidah he gave me a pony, a beast that was no mean runner. He sent me to give the pony a run on the open temple-car field. I did as I was bidden, in continual imminent danger of a fall on that uneven ground. That I did not fall was solely because he was so determined that I should *not* do so. Shortly afterwards Jyotidada sent me out riding on the roads of Calcutta also. Not on the pony, but on a high-spirited thoroughbred. One day it galloped straight in through the porch, with me on its back, to the courtyard where it was accustomed to be fed. From that day on I had nothing more to do with it.

I have referred elsewhere to the fact that Jyotidada was a practised shot. He was always eager for a tiger-hunt. One day the *shikari* Biswanath brought news that a tiger was living in the Shilaidah jungle, and Jyotidada at once furbished up his gun and

prepared for sport. Surprising to say, he took me with him. It never seemed to occur to him that there could be any danger.

Biswanath was certainly an expert *shikari*. He knew that there was nothing manly about hunting from a *macha*. He would call the tiger out and shoot face to face, and he never missed his aim.

The jungle was dense, and in its lights and shadows the tiger refused to show himself. A rough kind of ladder was made by cutting footholds in a stout bamboo, and Jyotidada climbed up with his gun ready to hand. As for me, I was not even wearing sandals, I had not even that poor weapon with which to drive off the tiger. Biswanath signed to us to be on the alert, but for some time Jyotidada could not even see the tiger. After long straining of his bespectacled eyes he at last caught a glimpse of its striped body in the thicket. He fired. By a lucky fluke the shot pierced the animal's backbone, and it was unable to rise. It roared furiously, biting at all the sticks and twigs within reach, and lashing its tail. I knew very well that it was not in the nature of tigers to wait so long and patiently to be killed. I wondered if some one had had the forethought to mix a little opium with its feed on the previous night? Otherwise, why so drowsy?

There was another occasion when a tiger came to the jungles of Shilaidah. My brother and I set out on elephants to look for him. My elephant lurched ponderously on, uprooting cane from the sugar-cane fields and munching as he went, so that it was like riding on an earth-quake. The jungle lay ahead of us. He crushed the bushes with his knees, pulled them up with his trunk and cast them to the ground. I had previously heard tales of terrible possibilities from Biswanath's brother Chamru, how sometimes the tiger leaps on to the elephant's back and clings there, digging in his claws. Then the elephant, trumpeting with pain, rushes madly through the forest, and whoever is on his back is dashed against the trees till arms, legs and head are crushed out of all recognition. That day, as I sat my elephant, the

image of myself thus pounded to a jelly filled my imagination from first to last. For very shame I concealed my fear, and glanced from side to side in assured fashion, as though to say "Let me but catch a glimpse of the tiger, and then ! . . ." The elephant entered the densest part of the jungle, and coming to a certain place, suddenly stood stock-still. The *mahout* made no attempt to urge it forward. The two *shikaris* had apparently more respect for the tiger's powers than the elephant's. Their great anxiety was undoubtedly that Jyotidada should so wound the tiger as to provoke it to attack. Suddenly the tiger leaped from the jungle, swift as the thunder-charged storm from the cloud. We are accustomed to the sight of a cat, dog, or jackal, but here was concentrated energy of neck and shoulders, yet no sense of heaviness in that perfectly proportioned strength. It crossed the open farmlands at a canter in the full blaze of the midday sun. What loveliness, ease and speed of motion ! The land was empty of crops ; here indeed was a setting in which to feast one's eyes on the running tiger, this wide stretch of golden stubble drenched in the noonday sunlight.

There is one more story that may prove amusing. In Shilaidah the gardener used to pluck flowers and arrange them in the vases. I took a fancy to write poetry with a pen dipped in the coloured essences of flowers. But the tiny drops that I could obtain by squeezing were not sufficient to wet the tip of my pen. I decided that it must be done by machinery. It would do, I thought, if I had a cup-shaped wooden sieve and a pestle revolving in it. It could be turned by an arrangement of pulleys. I made known my wants to Jyotidada. It may be that he smiled to himself, but he gave no outward sign. He issued instructions, and the carpenter brought wood. Soon my machine was ready. I filled the wooden cup with flowers, but turn the ropes of the pestle as I would, the flowers merely turned to mud and not a drop of essence ran out. Jyotidada saw that the essence of flowers was incompatible with the grinding of machinery, yet he never laughed at me.



This was the only occasion in my life on which I descended to engineering. It is said in the *sastras* that there is a god who compasses the humiliation of those who ignore their own limitations. That god cast a glance that day upon my engineering, and from that time I have not so much as laid hands on any kind of machine, not even on a *sitar* or an *esraj*.

I described in my "*Reminiscences*" how Jyotidada went bankrupt in his attempt to run a *swadeshi* steamer company in competition with the Flotilla Company on the rivers of Bengal. *Bouthakrun's* death had taken place before then. Jyotidada gave up his rooms on the third floor and finally built himself a house on a hill at Ranchi.

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A new chapter in the life of the third storey room now opened, as I took up my abode there. Up to that time it had been merely one of my gypsy haunts, like the palanquin and the granary, and I roamed from one to another. But when *Bouthakrun* came all that was changed ; a garden appeared, and a piano was established there. Its flow of new tunes symbolised the changed tenor of my life.

Jyotidada used to arrange to have his coffee in the mornings in the shadow of the staircase room on the eastern side of the terrace. At such times he would read to us the first draft of some new play. From time to time I also would be called upon to supply a few lines with my unpractised hand. The sun gradually grew stronger, the crows cried hoarsely to each other as they sat on the highest roof keeping an eye upon the bread-crumbs. By ten o'clock the patch of shade had dwindled away and the terrace grew burning hot.

At midday Jyotidada used to go down to the office on the ground floor. *Bouthakrun* peeled and cut fruit and arranged it carefully on a silver plate, along with a few sweetmeats made with her own hands, and with a few rose petals scattered over it. In a tumbler was coconut milk or fruit-juice or fresh palmyra

kernels cooled in ice. Then she covered it with a silk kerchief embroidered with flowers, put it on a Moradabad tray, and despatched it to the office at tiffin time, about one or two o'clock.

Just then *Bangadarsan*<sup>1</sup> was at the height of its fame, and *Suryamukhi* and *Kundanandini*<sup>2</sup> were familiar figures in every house. The whole country thought of nothing else but what had just been published in the last instalment or what would come next.

When *Bangadarsan* came there was no midday nap for anyone in the neighbourhood. It was my good fortune not to have to snatch for it, for I had the gift of being an acceptable reader. *Bouthakrun* would rather listen to my reading aloud than read for herself. There were no electric fans then, but as I read I shared the benefits of *Bouthakrun*'s hand fan.

Now and again Jyotidada used to go for change of air to a garden-house on the bank of the Ganges. The Ganges shores had then not yet lost caste at the defiling touch of English commerce. Both shores alike were still the undisturbed haunt of birds, and the mechanised dragons of industry did not darken the light of heaven with the black breath of their upreared snouts.

My earliest memory of our life by the Ganges is of a small two-storey house. The first rains had just fallen. Cloud shadows danced on the ripples of the stream, cloud shadows lay dark upon the jungles of the further shore. I had often composed songs of my own on such days, but that day I did not do so. The lines of Vidyapati came to my mind, "Brimmed with rain is the month of *Bhadra*, empty my temple stands." Moulding them to my own melody and stamping them with my own musical mood, I made them my own. The memory of that monsoon day, jewelled with that music on the Ganges shore, is still preserved in my treasury of rainy season songs. I see in memory the tree-tops struck ever and again by great gusts of wind, till their

1. A famous Bengali magazine edited by the well-known Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterji.

2. Characters in Bankim Chandra's novels.

boughs and branches were tangled together in an ecstasy of play. The boats and dinghies raised their white sails and scudded before the gale, the waves leaped against the *ghat* with sharp, slapping sounds. *Bouthakrun* came back and I sang my song to her. She listened in silence and said no word of praise. I must then have been sixteen or seventeen years old. We used to have arguments even then about various matters, but no longer with our former zest.

A little while after we removed to Moran's Garden. That was a regular palace. The rooms, both upstairs and down, had coloured glass in their windows, the floors were of marble, and steps led down from the long verandah to the very edge of the Ganges. Here a fit of wakefulness by night came upon me, and I used to pace to and fro, as I did later on the banks of the Sabarmati. That Garden is no longer in existence, the iron jaws of the Dundee Mills have crushed and swallowed it.

At the mention of Moran's Garden there comes back the memory of our daily meals under the *bakul* tree. The food owed its flavour not to spices but to the skilful hands that prepared it. How I remember our sacred-thread ceremony, when we two boys were fed by *Bouthakrun* with the ceremonial rice and cow's *ghee* ! For those three days even greedy rascals like us enjoyed our fill of tasty and savoury dishes.

It was a great annoyance to me that it was so difficult for me to fall ill. All the other boys in the house could manage it, and then they would enjoy *Bouthakrun's* personal care. Not only did they have her attention, but they took up all her time, and my own share of it was correspondingly diminished.

So came to an end that page of the history of the third floor, and with it *Bouthakrun* also passed away. After that the third floor became my own domain, but it was no longer as in the old days.

I have wandered in my story up to the very gateway of my young manhood. I must return to the territory of my boyhood once more.

Next I must give some account of my sixteenth year. At its very entrance stands *Bharati*.\* Nowadays the whole country seethes with the excitement of bringing out papers, and I can well understand the strength of that passion when I look back on my own madcap escapades. That a boy like me, with neither knowledge nor attainments, should succeed in establishing himself in that *salon*, or at least in escaping reprimand there, shows in itself that the general attitude towards children was changing. *Bangadarsan* was then the only magazine in the country controlled by a mature hand. As for ours, it was a medley of the mature and the crude. Borodada's contributions were as difficult to understand as they were to write; and side by side with them stood a story of mine, the raw verbosity of whose style I was too young to appraise, nor did others apparently possess the critical judgment to do so.

The time has come to say something of Borodada. Jyotidada held court in that third floor room, and Borodada in our south verandah. At one time he plunged into the deepest problems of metaphysics, far outside the range of our experience. There were few to listen to what he wrote and thought, and he would not lightly let any man go who showed himself willing to be audience. Nor would the man himself soon relinquish Borodada, but what he claimed from him was not alone the privilege of listening to metaphysics. One such man attached himself whose name I do not remember, but everyone called him "The Philosopher." My other brothers made great fun of him, not only about his love for mutton chops, but about his endless stream of varied and urgent necessities. Besides philosophy, Borodada then began to take great interest in the construction of mathematical problems. The verandah would be full of papers, covered with figures, flying about in the south wind. Borodada could not sing, but he used to play an English

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\* Monthly magazine started by the Poet's eldest brother Dwijendranath Tagore referred to here as Borodada. It ran for several years.—Ed.

flute, not for the sake of the music, but in order to measure mathematically the notes of each scale. After that he occupied himself for a time in writing *Svapna-Prayana*. Before doing so, he began experimenting in the resonance of words ; he sought to add stateliness to Bengali poetry by mingling with it a due measure of sonorous Sanskrit. Many of these attempts he retained, but many he threw away, and torn pages were scattered everywhere. After that he started to write his book of poems, but he threw away far more than he kept, for he was not easily satisfied with his work. We had not the sense to pick up and keep all these rejected lines. As he wrote he would read his work, and people would gather round him to listen. Our whole household was intoxicated with this wine of poetry. Sometimes in the midst of his reading he would burst into a great shout of laughter. His laughter was ample and generous as the skies, but woe betide the man who sat within reach when the fit took him ; he received a slap on the back to shake his very soul. This south verandah was the living fountain of the life of *Jorasanko*, but the fountain dried up when Borodada went to live at the Santiniketan *asrama*. I remember, however, times spent in the garden opposite that south verandah, when with mind made listless by the touch of the autumn sun I composed and sang a new song : "Today in the autumn sun, in my dreams of dawn, a nameless yearning fills my soul." I remember also a song made in the quivering heat of one blazing noon : "In this listless abandon of spirit, ever present, I know not what games I play with my own self."

Another striking thing about Borodada was his swimming. He would swim backwards and forwards across our tank at least fifty times. When he lived at Panihati Garden he used to swim far out into the Ganges. With his example before us we also learned to swim as boys. We started to learn by ourselves. We would wet our pyjamas and then pull them up tight so as to fill them with air. In the water they swelled out round our waists like balloons, and we could not possibly sink. When

I was older and stayed on the river-lands<sup>1</sup> of Shilaidah, I once swam across the Padma. This was not as wonderful an achievement as it sounds. The Padma was full of alluvial islands which broke the force of its current, so that the feat was not worthy of any great respect. Still, it was certainly a story with which to impress landsmen, and I have used it so many times. When I went as a boy to Dalhousie, my father never forbade me to wander about by myself. With an alpenstock in my hand I traversed the footpaths, climbing one hill after another. It was most amusing to scare myself with my own make-believe. Once while going steeply downhill I stepped on a heap of withered leaves at the foot of a tree. My foot slipped a little and I saved myself with my stick. But perhaps I might not have been able to stop myself! I wondered how long it would have taken to roll down the steep slope and fall into the waterfall far below. I described vividly to Mother all that might have happened. Then, wandering in the deep pine-woods, I might suddenly have come upon a bear—that also was certainly something worth talking about. As nothing ever really happened I stored up all these imaginary adventures in my mind. The story of my swimming across the Padma was much of a piece with this class of romances.

When I was seventeen I had to leave the editorial board of *Bharati*, for it was then decided that I should go to England. Further it was considered that before sailing I should live with *Mejdada*<sup>2</sup> for a time to get some grounding in English manners. He was then a judge in Ahmedabad, and *Mej-Bouthakrun* and her children were in England, waiting for *Mejdada* to get a furlough and join them.

I was torn up by the roots and transplanted from one field to another, and had to get acclimatised to a new mental atmosphere. At first my shyness was a stumbling block at every turn. I wondered how I should keep my self-respect among all these new acquaintances. It was not easy to habituate myself to strange

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1. Tracts of rich alluvial land often found as islands in the great rivers (*Beng.* বঙ্গ).

2. My second brother.

surroundings, yet there was no means of escape from them ; in such a situation a boy of my temperament was bound to find his path a rough one.

My fancy, free to wander, conjured up pictures of the former history of Ahmedabad. The judge's quarters were in Shahibag, the former palace grounds of the Muslim kings. During the daytime *Mejdada* was away at his work, the vast house seemed one cavernous emptiness, and I wandered about all day like one possessed. In front was a wide terrace, which commanded a view of the Sabarmati river, whose knee-deep waters meandered along through the sands. I felt as though the stone-built tanks, scattered here and there along the terrace, held locked in their masonry wonderful secrets of the luxurious bathing-halls of the Begums.

We are Calcutta people, and history had never lived for me there. Our vision had been confined to the narrow boundaries of these stunted times. In Ahmedabad I felt for the first time that history had paused, and was standing with her face turned to the glorious past. Her former days were buried in the earth like the treasure of the *yakshas*.\* In my mind formed the first shadowy outline of the story of *Hungry Stones*.

How many hundred years have passed since those times ! In the minstrels' gallery an orchestra played day and night, choosing tunes appropriate to the eight periods of the day. The rhythmic beat of horses' hoofs echoed on the streets, and great parades were held of the mounted Turkish cavalry, the sun glittering on the points of their spears. In the court of the king whispered conspiracies were ominously rife. Abyssinian eunuchs, with drawn swords, kept guard in the inner apartments. Rose-water fountains played in the baths of the Begums, the bangles tinkled on their arms. Today Shahibag stands silent, like a forgotten tale ; all its colour has faded, and its varied sounds have died away ; the splendours of the day are withered and the nights have lost their savour.

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\* Demons who guard Treasure.

Only the bare skeleton of those old days remained to me, its head a naked skull that had no crown. It would be too much to say that I was able, in the store-house of the mind, fully to re-clothe those dry bones with flesh and blood and restore their ancient form. Even the preliminary sketch, the first rough draft, was far from realistic, a creation of the fancy. Such patch-work is easy when little is known and the rest has to be imagined. The picture that after these eighty years I retain even of myself does not correspond line for line with the reality, but is largely a product of the imagination.

After I had stayed there for some time *Mejdada* decided that perhaps I should be less home-sick if I could mix with women who could familiarise me with conditions abroad. It would also be an easy way to learn English. So for a while I lived with a Bombay family. One of the daughters of the house was a modern educated girl who had just returned with all the polish of a visit to England. My own attainments were only ordinary, and she could not have been blamed if she had ignored me. But she did not do so. Not having any store of book-learning to offer her, I took the first opportunity to tell her that I could write poetry. This was the only capital I had with which to gain attention. When I told her of my poetical gift, she did not receive it in any carping or dubious spirit, but accepted it without question. She asked the poet to give her a special name, and I chose one for her which she thought very beautiful. I wanted that name to be entwined with the music of my verse, and I enshrined it in a poem which I made for her. She listened as I sang it in the *Bhairavi* mode of early dawn, and then said, "Poet, I think that even if I were on my death-bed your songs would call me back to life." There is an example of how, when girls want to show their appreciation, they speak in a sweetly exaggerated fashion in order to give pleasure. I remember that it was from her that I first heard praise of my personal appearance,—praise that was often very delicately given.

For example, she asked me once very particularly to



remember one thing : "You must never wear a beard. Don't let anything hide the outline of your face." Everyone knows that I have failed to follow that advice. But she herself did not live to see my disobedience in this matter of my beard.

In some years, birds strange to Calcutta used to come and build in that banyan tree of ours. They would be off again almost before I had learnt to recognize the dance of their wings, but they brought with them a strangely lovely music from their distant jungle homes. So, in the course of our life's journey, some angel from a strange and unexpected quarter may cross our path, speaking the language of our own soul, and enlarging the boundaries of the heart's possessions. She comes unbidden, and when at last we call for her she is no longer there. But as she goes, she leaves on the drab web of our lives a border of embroidered flowers, and for ever and ever the night and day are for us enriched.

.. .. .

The Master-Workman, who made me, fashioned His first model from the native clay of Bengal. I have described this first model, which is what I call my boyhood, and in it there is little admixture of other elements. Most of its ingredients were gathered from within, though the atmosphere of the home and the home people counted for something too. Very often the work of moulding goes no further than this stage. Some people get hammered into shape in the book-learning factories, and these are considered in the market to be goods of a superior stamp.

It was my good fortune to escape almost entirely the impress of these mills of learning. The masters and pundits who were charged with my education soon abandoned the thankless task. There was Gnanachandra Bhattacharya, the son of Anandachandra Vedantabagish, who was a B.A. He realised that this boy could never be driven along the beaten track of learning. The teachers of those days, alas ! did not consider it so important

that boys should all be poured into the mould of degree-holding respectability. There was then no demand that rich and poor alike should all be confined within the fenced-off regions of college studies. Our family had no wealth then, but it had a reputation, so the old traditions held good, and no interest was taken in conventional academic success. From the lower classes of the Normal school we were transferred to De Cruz's Bengal Academy. It was the hope of my guardians that even if I got nothing else, I should get enough mastery of spoken English to save my face. In the Latin class I was deaf and dumb, and my exercise books of all kinds kept from beginning to end the unrelieved whiteness of a widow's cloth. Confronted by such unprecedented determination not to study, my class-teacher complained to Mr. De Cruz, who explained that we were not born for study, but merely for the purpose of paying our monthly fees. Gnana Babu was of a similar opinion, but found means of keeping me occupied nevertheless. He gave me the whole of *Kumārasambhava*\* to learn by heart. He shut me in a room and gave me *Macbeth* to translate. Then Pundit Ramsarbaswa read *Sakuntala* with me. Outside the classroom they left me alone, and got some return. These then were the materials that formed my boyish mind, together with what other Bengali books I picked up at random.

I landed in England, and foreign workmanship began to play a part in the fashioning of my life. How capricious is Fortune!—I went to England for a regular course of study, and a desultory start was made, but it came to nothing. *Mej-Bouthan* was there, and her children, and my own family circle absorbed nearly all my interest. I hung about around the school-room, a master taught me at the house, but I did not give my mind to it.

However, gradually the atmosphere of England made its impression on my mind, and what little I brought back from that country was from the people I came in contact with. Mr. Palit finally succeeded in getting me away from my own

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\* A work of Kalidasa.

family. I went to live with a doctor's family, where they made me forget that I was a foreigner. Mrs. Scott lavished on me a genuine affection, and cared for me like a mother. I had then been admitted to London University, and Henry Morley was teaching English literature. His teaching was no dry-as-dust exposition of dead books. Literature came to life in his mind and in the sound of his voice, it reached to our inner beings where the soul seeks its nourishment, and nothing of its essential nature was lost. With his guidance, I found the study of the Clarendon Press books at home to be an easy matter, and I took upon myself to be my own teacher. For no reason at all Mrs. Scott would sometimes fancy that I did not look well, and would become very worried about me. She did not know that the portals of sickness had been barred against me from childhood. I used to bathe every morning in ice-cold water—in fact, in the opinion of the doctors, it was almost a sacrilege that I should survive such flagrant disregard of the accepted rules !

I was able to study in the University for three months only, but I obtained almost all my understanding of English culture from personal friendships. Our Creator takes every opportunity to mingle new elements in our make-up. Three months of close intimacy with English hearts sufficed for this development. Mrs. Scott made it my duty each evening till eleven o'clock to read aloud by turn from poetic drama and history. In this way I did a great deal of reading in a short space of time. It was not prescribed class study, and my familiarity with human thought grew side by side with my knowledge of literature. I went to England but I did not become a barrister. I received no shock calculated to shatter the original framework of my life—rather east and west met in friendship in my own person. Thus it has been given me to realise in my own life, like the sun\* from which I am named, the common bond which unites all lands.

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\* Bengali, *Rabi* ( রবি ) the sun.

# WHAT MIGHT HINAYANA BUDDHISTS LEARN FROM CHRISTIANITY ?

Prof. James B. Pratt

NEARLY four years ago I published in this Quarterly\* an article with the title, *What Can Christians Learn From Buddhism ?* The answer I suggested to the question was by no means exhaustive, for surely there are a great many things we all may learn from each other : but I pointed out certain very noble characteristics of the religion founded by Gotama which the followers of the religion founded by Jesus would do well to ponder. Among these characteristics perhaps the most fundamental was freedom from authority and an ultimate appeal to reason. From this there naturally followed a wide tolerance toward all sorts of religions and philosophies and toward every sincere attempt to pursue the truth : and with this an extraordinary elasticity in thought, which has enabled Buddhism to avoid some of the cramping effects of credal formulations and to retain a considerable amount of the growing power of youth. Another fortunate result of its fundamental rationality has been freedom from the hampering necessity to defend various specific beliefs of an historical or scientific sort. Buddhism does not need to worry, as so many Christians have worried, over dates and personalities and events, or over the questions of astronomy and biology. Finally there is a grandeur in the Buddhist conception of the cosmos, a sweep of the imagination in its range over time and space, that makes many of the doctrines of traditional and "orthodox" Christianity seem almost petty.

I wrote the article in question not because I dislike Christianity but because I cherish for it profound admiration and deep love. It is a very great religion : but in its growth and its development it has not realized all its possibilities, nor is it contributing to its followers all that it might give. There are

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\* See *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. II, Part IV, page 49.

things in Buddhism which it might well make its own. In similar spirit, I am writing this article, not because I am hostile to Buddhism but because I have cherished for its Founder a life-long reverence, and I feel for the great movement he inaugurated a lively and genuinely affectionate good-will. A good friend should give not only praise but kindly criticism when he thinks it needed, and sympathetic suggestions for amendment and growth.

Let me then say, first of all, that in my opinion Hinayana Buddhism does not nourish the spiritual life of its followers as richly as I think it might. Perhaps the most fundamental reason for this is to be found in its atheism. I do not think we are justified in asserting that the Founder was an atheist in the usual sense of that word, nor, on the other hand, should I feel justified in entering a guess as to what his ultimate philosophy may have been. But certainly if we may trust the accounts left us he discouraged metaphysical enquiry and discussion, and certainly the Hinayana Buddhism of the orthodox monks of our day is pretty consistently atheistic. Both of these tendencies—atheism and humanistic or agnostic positivism ( the technical but misleading term for the refusal to deal with ultimates )—are distinctly impoverishing to a religion. For the living function of a religion is not merely to point the wise way to live ; a system of ethics does that. Religion is much more than philosophy. Men need it not only for intellectual and moral guidance, but for encouragement, for inspiration, for cosmic reinforcement of the moral ideal, for growth of a sense of relationship with the ultimate. When the Hinayana cut itself off from the metaphysical insights—both intellectual and mystical—of Hinduism at its best, it sacrificed a large part of its opportunity and power as a religion.

To put the *more* of religion into one term, we might say it goes beyond morality in being *worship*. The religious sense of something

“.....far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky and in the mind of man"

this is the supreme differentia of human nature by which it is distinguished from all other life that we know. And the cultivation of this cosmic sense is worship. I do not say that this cosmic sense is impossible or non-existent within the Hinayana: but certainly both the atheistic and the exclusively humanistic emphasis of much intellectual Buddhism in our day does, at the least, make the cultivation of the cosmic and mystical a difficult matter.

Hinayana Buddhism, of the humanistic and monastic pattern, has, to be sure, developed a form of worship. This is of the sort I have, in another place,\* called "subjective". Its aim is solely and confessedly to produce a desired effect upon the mind of the worshipper. Upon the basis of the Hinayana atheism or humanism it could hardly attempt anything else. What I have called "objective worship", the attempt to influence in some way the Deity, to draw near to the Divine, to bring about a closer relation between oneself and the ultimate Determiner of Destiny—this, in the nature of things, would be impossible for one who, like the Hinayana Buddhist, explicitly denies the reality of a Divine or the possibility of affecting it. Hence the utmost such a man can consistently do is to try to produce certain psychological states in his own mind and the minds of others.

Now subjective worship—the attempt by the use of ritualistic practices to produce desirable effects in human minds—is notably successful in Hinduism, in many forms of Christianity, in Islam and Judaism. But it is successful in these religions precisely because of the faith these religions possess and inculcate in the very cosmic situation which the Hinayana either denies or discourages its followers from contemplating. Subjective worship works most efficiently where it can presuppose and make

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\* *The Religious Consciousness*, Chapter XIV.

use of objective worship. The repetition of prayers and sacred verses and the chanting of hymns produce desirable effects upon the human mind because the human mind believes that in these forms of worship something really happens. Convince the ordinary worshipper that it is all make-believe or that it is at best a kind of hypnosis psychological medicine, and ( except for a few who are "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought") very little of the desired psychological effect will be produced. This is what I mean by saying that the Hinayana attempt to be without cosmic reference results in a considerable reduction of the power for good over its followers which it might otherwise possess.

In suggesting that the Hinayana would gain in power by giving up its atheistic and "positivistic" attitude, I am not urging upon its leaders the adoption of an antiquated deism or a superstitious and anthropomorphic form of theism. There are open to the Hinayana cosmic conceptions which are far from being subject to the criticisms which it seems to fear and with which Buddhists sometimes deride those who find in the universe something more than matter and its processes and laws. Both Sankara's and Ramanuja's forms of the Vedanta, the faiths of several of the Bhakti sects, the religious philosophy of the Brahma Samaj and of Tagore, the enlightened forms of Christian and Jewish and Moslem teaching, all present possibilities of cosmic belief thoroughly consistent with the essential part of the Buddha's gospel and capable of bringing that ontological reinforcement to the noble moral ideals of Buddhism which weak human nature needs.

The Hinayana has, in fact, always possessed at least the beginnings of such faith ; it has always had a kind of substitute for God. For the law of Karma to a slight extent performs the function of the Divine. It is a poor substitute, to be sure, but if one thinks out and accepts all that it implies one will find it hard indeed to stop short of the cosmic position of some of the other great religions. Belief in the great Karmic moral law of the Universe, that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap,

is the beginning of a faith that justice and purpose and, therefore, mind is fundamental to things.

Perhaps my Buddhist friends may be less hospitable to my next suggestion than to the one just made : but it seems to me of fundamental importance. I do not see how religion can feed the spiritual life of its followers in more than meagre fashion unless it recognizes and teaches the reality of individual souls or selves in some pretty solid sense. I do not say it should insist upon an animistic double or upon any one specific and detailed philosophic doctrine of the ego. But the recognition of and emphasis upon the reality of a subject or experiencer in some sense of the word does seem to me essential for a consistent retention of the essentially religious point of view. This fact, I think, was plainly realized by Gotama. For reasons which I have stated at length elsewhere,\* and which have been very much better stated by Mrs. Rhys Davids, it seems to me pretty plain that the *anatta* doctrine was never taught nor accepted by the Founder, and that it originated as one of several additions and modifications, made by his monastic successors, some years, perhaps some centuries, after his death.

Whatever be one's conclusion on this historical question, the more important philosophical question of the value of the *anatta* is quite plain. Only if there be some sort of continuing and identical self can one hope for the spiritual survival of bodily death or retain the doctrine of moral responsibility and of moral reward and punishment. Without a subject-self the causal law will indeed remain ; but one who considers this the equivalent of the doctrine of moral responsibility shows thereby that he has little inkling what the latter means.

Moreover, if we combine the *anatta* and its consequences with the atheism of orthodox Hinayana, we have resulting the conception of a universe which has little to distinguish it from the most unspiritual materialism. In such a world there is nothing

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\* *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, pp. 78-82.



divine, no cosmic purpose, no immortality, no self, no freedom, no moral accountability. There is merely a predetermined process of physical and psychical events, the latter being mere "flat pieces of psychological surface." Not only is the whole picture dismal and hopeless in the extreme : it is utterly out of keeping with the moral earnestness and spiritual hopefulness of the great Founder.

Hinayana Buddhism is at its finest in the moral field. Here it has a great deal in common with Christianity, and the two religions should be regarded as comrades in a joint enterprise. The conscious rationality of Buddhist morality and its steady appeal to human experience is something from which Christians might well learn. There are, I believe, a few ethical matters on which Buddhists, on their part, might learn something from Christianity. I have in mind, for one thing, the danger of a subtle selfishness to which the teaching of the Canon and the monastic Hinayana of our day is repeatedly exposed. This danger arises particularly from the Second Noble Truth, to the effect that the cause of suffering is desire, together with the presupposition of nearly all Buddhist teaching that the aim of morality is the avoidance of suffering. The Second Noble Truth is aimed chiefly against the lower desires and preoccupation with self: but it is impossible logically to stop with this, and in fact the Buddha of the Canon does not do so. It is not only attachment to low and evil things that must be avoided : every sort of attachment endangers one's peace and therefore should be ended. One should "cut all the ties" and "wander alone like a rhinoceros." Even family affections are pledges to fortune and the wise man will escape them. "Those who have a hundred dear ones have a hundred woes: those who have ninety dear ones have ninety woes: those who have one dear one have one woe : those who hold nothing dear have no woe."<sup>1</sup> The ideal disciple should so train his mind that he would suffer no grief even at the loss of the Master.<sup>2</sup> Says the

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1. Udana VIII, 8. See also Psalms of the Sister, 88, 47, 50, 68.

2. Samyutta XXII, 80.

Dhammapada, "Let no man love anything: loss of the beloved is evil. Those who love nothing and hate nothing have no fetters."\* A Ceylonese monk once said to my wife : "It is wrong for you to love your husband or your father. They might die."

If personal ties are pledges to fortune, earnest desire for the welfare of others, and for the success of some great cause are surely equally so. Those for whom we wish spiritual salvation may degenerate ; the causes we love may fail. It is plain, therefore, that in the Second Noble Truth and in the teachings which naturally follow from it there is a latent but unavoidable selfishness, a selfishness all the more dangerous because of its subtle and hidden nature. It seems to say : Do not venture ; you might get hurt !

As I have already suggested, this is the logical outcome of the Second Noble Truth for the reason that Buddhist teaching so repeatedly takes it for granted without discussion that personal suffering and the loss of inner peace is the one great evil to be avoided at all cost. Sometimes even the Buddha of the Nikayas seems to manifest an almost pathological fear of sorrow. I think Hinayana Buddhism might learn something of considerable value by a study of the Christian attitude toward every sort of suffering. "In this world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer : I have overcome the world." The Christian is willing to take a chance ; the wise Buddhist will play safe.

Now I am not denying that there are noble passages in the Buddhist Canon in praise of unselfish love and of heroic devotion. Several of the Buddha's teachings are entirely compatible with an attitude toward suffering similar to the Christian. But I do not see how these teachings and passages can in the last analysis be made compatible with the Second Noble Truth and with the many sayings, like those quoted above, which derive from it. The authors of the Mahayana plainly felt about it pretty much as I feel, and so do nearly all Mahayanist scholars of our day. And what-

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\* XVI, 211.

ever may have been the Founder's own teaching on the matter, I think we may say this with considerable confidence : that while Christian thought has developed in the direction of a courageous acceptance and spiritual utilization of suffering, the Hinayanist attitude toward it, under monastic direction, has largely degenerated into a rather pusillanimous and often selfish prudence in favour of saving one's own skin .

And this brings me to point out a most unfortunate influence in the historical development of Buddhism. I refer to the control exercised over its thought and practice by the monastic mind. Immensely more than either Christianity or Hinduism, Hinayana Buddhism has been a religion of monks. There are excellent things about monks ; but a monastery is not the place to search for freedom of thought, for the development and appreciation of the great human values, for unselfish devotion or heroic daring. Those of my readers who knew Mr. Dharmapala, the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society, will realize how very mild are my criticisms when compared with his scathing attacks upon the monastic institutions of Ceylon and Burma. I do not think the Hinayana can ever furnish the spiritual nourishment needed by the inhabitants of Southern Buddhist lands until energetic and deeply religious laymen take a good deal more of the leadership into their hands than they have possessed since the days of Asoka. In neither West nor East is there much promise of an important future for monasticism.

None of the great religions is capable of being credally defined or of being identified with any stated form of faith or practice. Religions are living things and with them, as with other living things, change, development, growth form the precondition of continued life. Buddhism, as I pointed out at length in my previous paper, has been most fortunate in the elasticity given it by the deep wisdom of its Founder—a character so ingrained, so essential to it, that not even twenty-five hundred years of monkish dominance have been able to weed it out. To this elasticity, this inherent power of change and growth I think

we may look with some hope for a new manifestation of power which will enable Buddhism to slough off those forms of ancient teaching that are ill adapted to the needs of the new day, and to develop those more fundamental insights of the great Founder which are of eternal human value, and thus, more efficiently than ever before, to nourish the spiritual life of the millions who look to it for the satisfaction of their deepest needs.

## FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS\*

To-day, when at dusk the lamps of the Nation  
will be kindled in honour of the Festival of Lights—  
lamps of gold and lamps of clay to make  
concerted radiance for a few brief hours : how  
deeply I rejoice. And with me the whole world  
rejoices : that the Lamp of your genius still  
glows and sheds its lovely lustre across the darkness  
of the world. Long may your aged and fragile hands  
hold aloft for the world's delight and inspiration the  
Light of Beauty—the shining Flame of Song !

Sarojini Naidu.

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\* The following beautiful lines were addressed to Rabindranath Tagore on the occasion of Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, 30th October, 1940.

# THE IDEALISM OF MAHATMA GANDHI\*

Dr. P. T. Raju, M.A., Ph.D.

THOUGH Mahatma Gandhi is not an academical philosopher, one can best understand Indian idealism by studying his life and work. Though he does not give us a system of philosophy in writing, his life itself is a system of philosophy. In him does the statement that Indian philosophy is a way of life and not merely a way of thought find a worthy illustration. For him philosophy is a way of life first and way of thought next. His life systematised its plan of work and expressed it in practice and not merely in theory. Philosophy as life reflected on itself is life that has become self-conscious, and this self-consciousness expressed itself now and then as a theory of his practice. Like Buddha he was urged on in his experiments on truth by the evil present in the world, the inequalities and injustices meted out by man to man. Certainly he did not start his life without a philosophical background; and that back-ground is Hindu philosophy. But Hindu philosophy is so vague and comprehensive a term that it may mean anything or nothing. It may mean some sectarian religion without any philosophy worthy of the name, or it may mean a most thoroughly developed system. A number of philosophical ideas found in many systems, including Jainism and Buddhism, are the common property of every Indian, and are woven into the web of his thought and action. But the possession of these ideas does not make a philosopher. Mahatma Gandhi must have started with the same stock; but he has gathered other ideas from Tolstoy, Ruskin, etc. But what makes his ideas particularly interesting is not the philosophical background but the fact that he rediscovered his philosophical ideas by the sheer necessity of his life demanding a plan of action with a theoretical justification. These ideas, like the ideas of truth,

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\* Extract from the author's *Idealistic Thought of India* ( to be published ).

are therefore not dead concepts for him but living forces that guide us and demand obedience. Professor Radhakrishnan rediscovered our philosophical concepts and infused life and vigour into their petrified forms by approaching them from the living philosophers of the West and comparing them with the concepts of the latter. Mahatma Gandhi infused life into some of them by coming across them in the very course of his life, which is a struggle for the discovery of truth. The results of his struggle, the conclusions of his life, are not the results of an "ideal experiment", as Bradley would call it, in which theory is compared to theory, but the result of actual experiment on his own life. As he is not an academical philosopher, he may not have given the full implications of his discoveries. But these implications can be developed and his philosophy can be presented in a systematic form. It is beyond our present purpose to deal at length with his ethical and political ideas. We are mainly concerned with his conception of reality, that is, only with the metaphysical side of his teaching. Books have been written by eminent men praising his principle of *ahimsa* or non-violence and love, admiring him for preaching it and comparing him to Christ and Buddha. Critics too of this principle are not wanting. Simply to follow either of them in praising or condemning the principle would only be to express our own prejudices. The advocates of force and violence may praise their own principle and condemn that of Mahatma Gandhi. And philosophically considering we would be in no better position than they. The advocacy of either violence or non-violence must have a metaphysical foundation. If we are to understand the metaphysical basis of Mahatma Gandhi's own ideas we must go deeper into his mind, and bring out his guiding ideas in a coherent form. Then only can we fix his philosophical position, and understand the real significance of *ahimsa* and why he lays so much emphasis on it.

The real clue to his conception of reality is found in the pregnant word, *Satyagraha*, which is generally translated by

Truth-force. He writes : "Satyagraha is literally holding on to truth, and it means, therefore, Truth-force. Truth is the soul or spirit. It is, therefore, known as soul-force. It excludes the use of violence because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and, therefore, not competent to punish. The word was coined in South Africa to distinguish the non-violent resistance of the Indians of South Africa from the contemporary 'passive resistance', of the suffragettes and others. It is not conceived as a weapon of the weak."<sup>1</sup> In this passage there are two important points to note. First, truth is soul or spirit. That is, the truth of the world is spirit but not matter. Secondly, Satyagraha means some force only indirectly. *Satya* means truth, and *agraha* means sticking on, holding on or persistence. So directly the word means persistence in truth ; and because this persistence is thought to have a peculiar power, Satyagraha is said to be Truth-force or the force of truth. It is our duty to persist in truth and not to yield to untruth ; and it is the nature of truth to establish itself wherever untruth prevails. Truth is existence or being and untruth is only apparent existence or being. However hard the latter tries to overcome the former, as existence is always existence and can never become non-existence, the latter must ultimately succeed. This is the significance of the saying, *dharmo jayati*, or truth succeeds. It is in the nature of things that truth must ultimately prevail, only because true existence is the final controlling factor both of our thought and action, however far they may deviate from it. But unfortunately the word *dharma* is interpreted as religion, rules of caste system and so forth, and the philosophical significance of the saying is missed.

But how truth is to overcome untruth, whether by terminating it by destruction or by transforming and absorbing it, we have no right to decide. That is why Mahatma Gandhi says that for us violence is excluded because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth. Of course he means absolute truth

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1. *Young India*, Vol. I, p. 222 ( Edited by Babu Rajendra Prasad ).



in detail. All knowledge of truth is not precluded, as otherwise we cannot persist in truth.

The passage preaches self-expression without aggression. But self-expression does not mean asserting oneself any way one likes. The true self is not the finite individual with his lust, whims and passions. It is the Spirit and there is only one Spirit in the universe. Mahatma Gandhi writes : "I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God ; and since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is."<sup>1</sup> All else is "illusion—Maya. We are not, He alone is."<sup>2</sup> So our finite self with all its weaknesses and imperfections is false. And it is not the false self that is to express itself, but the true self. The expression or assertion of the false self is aggression, and the expression of the true self is Satyagraha. Does this imply inactivity or passivity on our part ? If it does it would mean surrendering ourselves to untruth. The need for Satyagraha arises when untruth becomes aggressive ; and to remain passive is to allow ourselves to be conquered by it. But then how are we to assert ourselves ? Only as participating in Truth. Our duty is not to oppose ourselves as finite to untruth, but to know truth and, so far as we know it, to assert it. To assert it is to assert our true selves. In spite of our being identical with truth in essence, we as finite are not identical with it, and therefore we have no right to aim at the destruction of our opponents.

Mahatma Gandhi further tells us that truth is not only God but also Love. For this reason Satyagraha is the force of love and not of hatred. God loves and does not hate ; but we both love and hate. Hatred leads us away from truth. Hence we should not hate our opponents and destroy them by violence.

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1. Quoted from C. F. Andrews : *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 48

2. *Ibid*, p. 47.

Because God is love, the fact that God destroys must mean, according to Mahatma Gandhi, that he destroys in love and not in hatred. Mahatma Gandhi tells us that destruction or violence is the prerogative of God. But this destruction is not annihilation. No Hindu believes in the annihilation of even the finite self. Even in the extreme forms of monism like the Advaita, according to which the *jīva* becomes merged in the Infinite and becomes one with it in the state of liberation, the finite self, so long as it is finite, is never annihilated, but continues to take one birth after another according to its merit and demerit. Hence what we call destruction, punishment, etc., meted to the *jīva* by God, when the former takes a particular line of action, is only thwarting and checking him in the hope that the *jīva* thus thwarted may reflect and realise his mistakes. But still God allows the *jīva* the freedom between good and evil. Hence the conflict, and the need for Satyagraha. The *jīva* sometimes chooses evil, which means the assertion of his own particular self against Truth or the Universal Self. This assertion violates the universal order of things established by God. Conflict is consequently inevitable. And in this conflict we are not to assert our finite self, which again is false and will introduce a new conflict in place of, if not in addition to, the old one, but must hold on to Truth and assert our true self, which is God Himself.

But does God exist? Mahatma Gandhi tells us that he has "no argument to convince through reason. Faith transcends reason."<sup>1</sup> But is this faith blind faith which is the same as superstition? He writes: "That which is beyond reason is surely not unreasonable. Unreasonable belief is blind faith and is open to superstition. To ask anybody to believe without proof is unreasonable, as for instance, asking an intelligent person to believe without the proof that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles." "True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief, therefore, in prophets or incarnations who had lived in remote ages is not an ideal superstition but a satisfaction of an innermost spiritual want. The formula, therefore, I have humbly suggested for guidance is rejection of every demand for faith where a matter is capable of present proof and unquestioned acceptance on faith of that which is itself incapable of proof except through personal experience.”<sup>1</sup> The existence of God can be felt only through personal experience, and the experience can be had only after our mind is purified by prayer and penance. The point of philosophical importance which this passage contains is that belief in God is “the satisfaction of an innermost spiritual want.” Mahatma Gandhi does not say here “an intellectual want.” But now probably he would say it. For in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* he says : “Of late, instead of saying God is Truth I have been saying Truth is God, in order more fully to define my religion. I used, at one time, to know by heart the thousand names of God which a booklet in Hinduism gives in verse form and which perhaps tens of thousands recite every morning. But nowadays nothing so completely describes my God as Truth. Denial of God we have seen. Denial of Truth we have not known.” God is generally felt to be necessary for religion ; but truth is always felt to be necessary for reason or intellect. Logic cannot deny that there is truth, but it may deny God. Thus truth satisfies an intellectual want. That is, it is the presupposition of our reasoning itself. Reason cannot stand without the admission that there is truth. It may be difficult to prove the existence of God as God, that is, as an omnipresent, omnipotent, benevolent person, who creates, controls and destroys the universe. But it is not difficult to prove the existence of God as Truth. For one who argues that there is no truth destroys the very basis of his argument as no argument which does not claim to be true is convincing and need be taken seriously.

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1. *Young India*, Vol. III, p. 148.

No student of logic can fail to understand the significance of the change from "God is Truth" to "Truth is God." No sane and sober man makes a judgment about a subject which is recognised to be unreal or the reality of which is doubted. A judgment about an unreal object is neither true nor false and would have no more value than the prattle of a child. It can have no significance for logic, the subject matter of which is the determination of truth and falsity. Hence every significant judgment presupposes an existent subject, and the judgment is about that subject. In the judgment "God is Truth", the existence of God is presupposed. But this existence may be questioned, when the predicate Truth would have to be referred to a non-existent subject. And the judgment would be without logical significance. But none questions that there is truth in the universe. When it is said that God is the same as that Truth, the judgment becomes significant and practically amounts to the proof of God.

This proof is the old ontological argument in a new form. There is no doubt about Mahatma Gandhi's being an absolutist and a monist. For him God is the only truth, He alone exists. Everything else is Maya. "We are all sparks of Truth. The sum-total of the sparks is indescribable, as-yet-unknown Truth, which is God." The ontological argument in its old form runs : I have an idea of an all-perfect Being. If this Being lacks in existence He cannot be perfect. Therefore He exists. The fallacy of this argument was exposed by many, especially by Kant, who pointed out that to have the idea of a perfect Being is not the same thing as the existence of that Being. Only when the idea is identical with existence can we infer God's existence from the idea we have of Him. But the idealist philosophers who came after Kant maintained that the ontological argument as understood by Kant is misunderstood. It is true that to have the idea of a hundred coins in my pocket is not the same as to have them in it. Those who formulate the argument are not so foolish as to maintain this. Its signifi-

cance is different. It is that the truth which is implied by our reasoning process must be existent. But we do not see its existence just as we see the existence of the paper and pen before me. Yet if we are to argue about anything, we have to admit the existence of truth. Just as one who comes and talks to us cannot convince us that he does not exist, so one who reasons at all cannot prove that truth does not exist. It is the regulative principle of our thinking. But what else is this regulative principle than existence itself? The difference between thinking and imagination is that the former is based on being and is about being, while the latter is free from being. The object of imagination need not be ; but the object of thought must be. That is why imagination works without reference to existence, while thought is grounded on existence. But what is always presupposed by thought cannot be an object of thought. Hence this principle of Truth, though not actually perceived, cannot be denied existence. Here idea involves and must involve existence.

This Truth, Mahatma Gandhi declares, is the law of the universe. He writes : "There is an unalterable Law governing every thing that exists or lives. It is not a blind law ; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings." "That law, then, which governs all life is God. Law and law-giver are one." This is really the central conception of all Indian idealism. For the Buddhist Nirvana, Sunya, Tathata, etc. , are the Truth ; they are the same as the true Buddhakāya, that is, the Dharmakāya or the body of law. It is this Law that supports the whole universe ; it is the essence of all things, their true nature. Every phenomenal thing moves towards the realisation of its true nature. So all things are held together by this Law. It is really the centre of the universe. Just as the centre imparts unity to all points on the circumference, the Law imparts unity to the manifold of the universe. This conception is found in the Vedānta also. The Brahman as the final Truth is the *ādhāra* or support of every appearance. It is the highest Law, Universal or *sāmānya*. We can find this idea even in Ramanuja's system. The Brahman as the soul is really

the principle of unity of the parts of His body which is constituted by the *jīvas* and the material world. Without that principle the body will decompose and its parts will fall apart. The same principle is the Law or Dharma from the stand-point of ethics and science, Truth or existence from that of logic and epistemology, and God from that of religion.

This conception of reality is the answer to the question : Is Satyagraha true to facts ? For every moral injunction the question may be raised : Is it according to reality ? In non-philosophical language we ask : Is it according to nature ? For it is felt that no moral law is binding upon us if it is not based upon the nature of things. For it is not morally binding upon man to fly with his hands in order to save some poor bird from the clutches of another. It is not morally binding upon a eunuch to be a father, though Manu declares that in order to pay off our debt to our forefathers ( *pitr̥na* ) we have to be fathers. To this question Mahatma Gandhi comes out with an affirmative answer. For Satyagraha means moral activity according to reality. Fichte long ago developed his system of philosophy to meet the demand that reality should be such as to meet the demands of the moral will. If the moral law is opposed to the natural law, the former cannot be binding on us. Hence the two spheres of morality and nature must ultimately agree with each other. Mahatma Gandhi can say that his Satyagraha is true to reality because it exhorts us to hold on to Truth and this Truth is the Law of the world, its essential nature. It is the only Existence. Everybody who does not hold on to Truth is thereby heading towards non-existence. The nature of this Truth, Mahatma Gandhi says, is Love. Hence if we are to realise the Truth, we should weed away all hatred from our hearts. But this weeding away of hatred does not involve passivity, for mere passivity would be yielding to untruth and allowing it to triumph. Hence we have to assert Truth, which is Love, in face of untruth. Provided we are sincere, Mahatma Gandhi has no doubts about the results.

## FOUR POEMS\*

BY

Rabindranath Tagore

### I

WHEN in the depth of the night  
in the phantasmal light of the sick bed  
appears your wakeful presence,  
it seems to me  
that the countless suns and stars  
have guaranteed my little life :  
then I know that you will leave me  
and the fear spreads from sky to sky,  
the fear of the terrible indifference  
of the All.

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\* These three are among the many poems written by the Poet during his recent serious illness. They have been translated from the original Bengali by himself. They embody touching references to those who have been serving him day and night during his illness. The first lines of the Bengali originals are given below :

- I. গহন রজনী মাঝে ।
- II. অবসন্ন আলোকের শরভের সায়াহ্ন প্রতিমা ।
- III. সংসারের নানাক্ষেত্রে নানাকর্মে বিক্ষিপ্ত চেতনা ।
- IV. কখন ঘুমায়েছিলাম ।—*Ed.*







## II

SHE is the spirit of an Autumn evening,  
    robed in the gleams of the vanished sunset,  
carrying the promise of the immense peace of the star,  
    guiding with her speechless ministry  
the languid steps of the long lingering hours of  
                                    the reluctant night  
    into the neighbourhood of the morning star.  
Her tresses touched by the gentle breeze of the dawn,  
    that smells of the morning worship,  
her sad and sweet face of the day's end  
    becomes radiant with the blessedness of the  
                                    morning light.

## III

In the endless paths of the world,  
    among numberless activities,  
her nature is scattered  
    with all that is unattained in her and  
                                    incomplete.  
By the sick bed around one eager aim  
    she appears as a new vision  
        complete in her being,  
where all the goodness of all things  
        becomes centred in her,  
in her touch, in her sleepless anxious eyes.

## IV

WHEN I rose from my sleep

I found a basket of oranges at my feet,  
my mind wondered who could be the giver

of such a gift ;

my guesses flew from one name to another

but sweet names were abandoned

like flowers in the spring,

and all varied names combined

to make this gift a perfect one.

## KHAQANI'S POETRY

Prof. Hadi Hasan, M.A., Ph.D.

IN the sixth century of the Hijra the province of Shirwan, lying between Georgia and the Caspian Sea produced three poets and three Kings. The Kings were Faridun I ( d. 514 A.H. ); his son Abul-Hayja Fakhru'd-Din Minuchihr II ( 514-544 A.H. ); and this Minuchihr's son Abu'l-Muzaffar Jalalu'd-Din Akhsatan I ( 544-594 A.H. ). The poets were Abu'l-'Ala, his pupil and son-in-law Khaqani, and Khaqani's pupil, Falaki. Abu'l-'Ala's date of death is uncertain ; Khaqani lived till at least 592 A. H. when he addressed an ode to Sultan Takish Khwarazmshah the conqueror of Isfahan ; and Falaki died young during the lifetime of Minuchihr II, *i.e.* before 544 A. H.

Abu'l-'Ala, Khaqani and Falaki were court-poets, professional panegyrists working and writing for money. But what money did they receive from the Shahs of Shirwan ? This raises the whole vexed question of poetry as a profession and a merchandise, on which curiously no work has been done. I shall, therefore, first give my general conclusion and then lead evidence in support of that conclusion.

Among the Arabs, the professional poets succeeded now and then in raising money from the fitful and capricious bounty of their patrons ; among the Turks, from the time of the Ottoman Sultan Muhammad II ( d. 1481 A. D. ), court-poets were drafted into the Ottoman educational service and those who did not care to accept any official position were pensioned off at the rate of 1,000 aspers a month ( one asper equals two pence ) ; among the Persians, with the exception of the Mughal Court in India, court-poets, like other court-servants were well-fed, well-clothed, well-lodged, but if they asked for liquid cash they were just turned off to shake their ears and graze in commons. Therefore, contrary to popular opinion based on anthologies

which regarded poetry as a gold-mine, the Persian poet ( who alone concerns us ) has been, in general, like Romeo's apothecary—famine in his cheeks, need and oppression in his eyes, contempt and beggary upon his back. "Begging is the law of the poets," says Anwari ; "and never has a poet been paid for his poetry," says Athiru'd-Din Awmāni.

The Mughal court in India, I have stated, was an exception. Let me first analyse this exception. The Emperor Aurangzeb had no love for the fine arts. He abolished the singers who tried to stage a mock-funeral of music : "Melody is dead and we are going to the grave-yard to bury it." "Very well," said the Emperor, "make the grave deep so that neither voice nor echo may issue from it." Fifty-nine poets were attached to the court of Akbar. What help they received is unknown ; but the poets, Fayḍi, Abdu's-Samad, Asaf Khan, Bir Bar, Qasim-i-Kahi and Taqi-i-Shustari, who were commanders of 400 horse and upwards, were all members of the Divine Faith ; and it is obvious that they were paid warmly for their religious lukewarmness rather than for their burning love of poetry. I have found only two specific cases of Akbar's gifts to poets. For an ode in every verse of which the word *fil* ( elephant ) was to appear, Qasim-i-Kahi received one lac of *tankahs* ; and two lacs of *tankahs* were given to Khwajah Husayn of Merv for an ode on the birth of Jehangir. The ode is throughout a double chronogram : in every verse, the first hemistich gives the date of Akbar's coronation, and the second hemistich, of Jehangir's birth. Now as Jehangir states explicitly in his *Tuzuk* : "in no reign, except mine, have *tankahs* been coined except of copper ; the gold and silver *tankahs* are my invention", the two poets of Akbar's court did not receive one lac of *rupees* and two lacs of *rupees* but Rs. 1,500/- and Rs. 3,000/- respectively.

Similarly, the only two instances of Jehangir's generosity to poets recorded by Jehangir himself are as follows :—In 1611 A. D. Naziri of Nishapur received Rs. 1,000/- for an ode in

imitation of Anwari ; and in 1618 A. D. Saida-i-Gilani ( who subsequently designed the Peacock Throne ) was weighed against *zar* for an ode in honour of the Emperor Jehangir and Prince Shah Jehan. Now *zar* ordinarily means gold, but I have no doubt that in this particular instance *zar* merely means money and not gold, for in 1636 A. D. ( the 12th of Shawwal 1045 A. H. ), Haji Muhammad Jan-i-Qudsi, the poet-laur-eate of the Emperor Shah Jehan was similarly weighed against *zar* and the value of this weight is given as Rs. 5,500 in the contemporary *Padshah-Nama*. Other rewards from Shah Jehan to poets are : to Abu Talib Kalim 200 gold *mohurs* and again 200 gold *mohurs* in 1645 ; to Qudsi 100 gold *mohurs* in 1640 and Rs. 2,000/- in 1644 A. D.

So much for actual facts on direct contemporary evidence ; but as zeros and non-contemporary works have no value, non-contemporary works have added zeros to the original figures converting copper into gold, hundreds into lacs. Thus the contemporary Rasmi says that Khan Khanan Abdur-Rahim was "liberal" in his patronage of the poets—Fayḍi, 'Urḍi, Naziri, Shakibi, Hayati, Nawī and Kufawī. But this vague patronage literally glitters with gold as presented in the non-contemporary *Ma'āthir-ul-'Umara* of 1780 A.D. : "Once Naziri said to the Khan Khanan Abdur-Rahim : 'I have not seen a lac of rupees. What sort of a heap does a lac of rupees make ?' So the Khan Khanan ordered a lac of rupees to be brought from his treasury. 'Thank God,' said the poet, 'I have seen the money.' 'Seen,' said his Excellency, 'nay, the money is thine.' "

So much for Mughal patronage. Persian patronage is even more non-contemporary. I have not found a single Persian poet who has himself stated what he ever received from his patron. Jami received an annual pension of £ 550 sterling from the Ottoman Sultans Muhammad II and Bayazid II and half this amount was the annual pension given by the Ottoman court to the author of the *Akhlāq-i-Jalālī*. But otherwise Khaqani says Unsuri received a lot of money and Unsuri says Rudaki received

40,000 *dirhems*. All these poets, therefore, are alike—not equally rich but equally poor, living in hope and dying in penury. “If eulogy fails to work,” says Anwari, “try satire and intimidation to loosen the purse-strings of the patron.” With the three Shirwani poets, however, the scheme did not work : Khaqani was imprisoned by Akhsatan I and Falaki by Minuchihr II whilst Abul-’Ala declares that people are desirous of wading in his blood.

## II

To consider now the poetry of Abul-’Ala, Khaqani and Falaki. Abul-’Ala was the poet-laureate of the Shirwan court but with the exception of a single ode preserved in the *Haft Iqlim*, his *diwan* has perished. Nothing therefore can be said of his poetry. Falaki’s *diwan*, which I edited in 1928 A. D., is remarkable, firstly, for its astrological terminology and, secondly, for its chronological value. In an ode addressed to Minuchihr II, for example, he says that the *Eid* of Ramadan ( which takes place on the first of Shawwal ) and the Zoroastrian festival of Mihrgan ( which takes place between the 16th and the 21st of the month Mihr ) have synchronized. To obtain, therefore, the date of composition of the ode ( which would necessarily give the date when Minuchihr II was living and reigning ) all that I had to do was to put in parallel columns the Hijra calendar and the Zoroastrian calendar, and to strike off the year when the first of Shawwal synchronized with Mihrgan. But how was the Zoroastrian calendar to be found ?

Now the Zoroastrian Year, which begins with the accession of Yazdigird III to the throne of Persia on June 16, 632 A. D. and which consists always of 365 days, i.e. 12 months of 30 days each plus 5 days added at the end of Aban, is not a solar year : the calendar recedes and rotates, and the festivals dependent upon this calendar, fluctuate correspondingly in different years. To equalize the Zoroastrian year with the solar year ( which consists of 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes 46 seconds of mean solar time ) the calendar was reformed by Umar-i-Khayyam, at the



order of Jalalud-Din Malikshah ( hence called the Jalali era ); and this new era, which began on the vernal Equinox, March 15, 1079 A. D., being a true era with the year consisting of 365, or in leap years, 366 days, no recession is possible. The work of Pope Gregory in 1582 A. D. therefore was merely a repetition of the work of Umar-i-Khayyam. The Julian Year ( named after Julius Caesar ) began in 46 B. C. and consisted of 365 days 6 hours. But the solar year consists of 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes 46 seconds. The excess is 11 minutes 14 seconds ; and the excess spread over a period of 16 centuries ( the time elapsing between Julius Caesar and Pope Gregory ) gives 12 days. Pope Gregory, therefore, made the calendar leap over 12 days from the 2nd of October 1582 A. D. to the 15th of October 1582 A. D. But, curiously, whilst we remember the work of Pope Gregory, we have forgotten the work of Umar-i-Khayyam which preceded the work of Pope Gregory by five centuries. In other words, I had to reconstruct the whole Zoroastrian calendar on the basis of R. Schram's *Calendariographische und Chronologische Tafeln*, and so found a solution to Falaki's chronological puzzle, namely that the first of Shawwal synchronized with the 19th of Mihr on the 28th of September 1128 A. D.

I proceed now to the poetry of the obscure but great Khaqani. Wherein lies his greatness ? The answer is personal but strictly relevant.

It occurred to me some time ago that the sonorous majesty of Firdawsi's *Shahnama* was curiously associated with sound-elimination and sound-synthesis. Several thousand couplets, for example, are dedicated to the legendary warrior Rustam and the most trivial *minutiae* of him are recorded, but of his voice there is no mention whatsoever. He speaks or he roars, as the occasion demands, and from this clue we are to gather what opinion we may, about the pitch of his voice, its intensity or its timbre. The delicate portraiture of Rudabe or of Tahmine—a perfect word-photograph—does not incorporate the quality of

their voice, although as Sa'di says : "Better than a pretty face is a sweet voice, for that pleases the bodily senses, and this nourishes the soul." The poet Firdawsi who commands only the bare word *Khurushidan* ( to emit sound ) for the creaking of a bow, the squeaking of leather, the beating of drums, the blowing of trumpets, the pealing of thunder, wailing and screaming and even for the crashing of boulders is no specialist in acoustics. Facial and not vocal beauty captures the hearts of Firdawsi's heroes, at best imperfect connoisseurs of beauty, strangely indifferent to the peculiar attraction of the mellow voice which can win Love more potently than the graceful contour of face and figure. Similarly all the objective poets of Persia have laid more emphasis on the eye than the ear. Sa'di has to fall back upon the word "sweet" ( *kbush* ) three times in one small paragraph in his *Gulistan* : and the same word "*kbush*" or "*shirin*" marks the highest achievement of Hāfiz in his *diwan* and of Nizami in his *Sikandar-nama*.

Till then I had kept away from Khaqani. What else shall I find in him but words ? But then it suddenly dawned upon me that I had not recognized my physician. If sound-words were obtainable anywhere, then the most likely place to search for them would be the *diwan* of the verbose Khaqani. And I seized the *diwan* with the agony of suspense.

And for a long while I was like one crying in the wilderness. And the words echoed in my ear : What went ye out in the wilderness for to see ? A reed shaken with the wind ? And then to me, to me, beyond all hope of mine, there came a shout, loud as from numbers without number, sweet as from blest voices uttering joy. And I knew the little organ had begun to discourse most eloquent music. The thing had become a trumpet ; that reed, shaken with the wind, had become a minstrel's pipe ; that little organ was an orchestra.

"The *rustle* of the wings of Gabriel, the trumpet-blare of Israfil,

The *din* of the scriptural *recitation* in Paradise, the *clink* of  
 the jewellery of *Houris*,  
 The *whizz* of the sphere at the time of the mystical dance,  
 the *tones* of the pentateuch at the time of recitation,  
 The *singing* of Barbad, the *piping* of minstrels and lutes, the  
*air* of the musician, the *tinkling* of the tambourines  
 and guitars,  
 The *moan* of wood-pigeons, the *carol* of larks and starlings,  
 the *cooing* of the ring-dove, the *singing* of the  
 nightingale,  
 The *tuning* of the lips of the beloved to the verses of  
 Khaqani, the *scaling* of the voice of Qumri to the  
 Phoenix mood,  
 —From all these *sounds* I do not receive that happiness as  
 from one single *note* of greeting from the land of  
 my friend.”

But even a more pleasant surprise was awaiting me. Working on Persian navigation I found that the theory of Persian maritime aversion, propounded by John Malcolm, William Vincent, Lord Curzon, and Sir P. M. Sykes, was not supported by the evidence of history. For apart from Achaemenian sea-power in the Mediterranean sea, and the exploration of the Persian Gulf under the direction of Darius the Great, and the attempted circumnavigation of Africa in the reign of Xerxes, there is the Persian conquest and colonization of Yeman under Nushirwan (531-579 A. D.), the navigation to Ceylon of which Cosmas Indicopleustes is an eye-witness, and the regular navigation to Canton described by Hwi Chao in 758 A. D. Later in 985 A. D. Muqaddasi writes on personal observation : “most of the ship-builders and seafaring men along the circuit of the Arabian peninsula are Persians.” Later still there is the Persian conquest and colonization of the East African littoral and of the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, Mafia and so forth. But curiously the evidence of history is not supported by the evidence of literature. And

for the most obvious of reasons : the sailor was not a scholar ; the scholar was not a sailor. The sailor came from the coast ; the scholar came from the interior of Persia. And for the Persians of the interior, the literati of Persia, the sea has always been an object of terror. Rhazes declared it incompatible with wisdom to risk the passage of the Oxus and had consequently to be conveyed across the Oxus like a live parcel ; Anwari wanted a demonstration of swimming and diving before he would cross the Oxus ; S'adi declared that safety lay on land ; and Hafiz abandoned the sea-voyage which was to take him to the court of Mahmud Shah Bahmani of the Deccan. It then struck me that just as seafaring people have called a camel "a ship of the desert," I should find, conversely, somewhere in Persian literature the quaint description of a ship as "a camel of the sea." And I began, accordingly, to search for marine themes in Persian literature. But experience should have taught me to economize labour. For where else could I hope to look forward with greater success than in the works of Khaqani ? And the thing was there almost identically :

"On the Tigris, a boat is at rest and in motion.  
Like the she-camel of Swaleh from head to foot and  
underneath is the serpent of Moses."

The prophet Swaleh, sent to the people of Thamud, produced miraculously from a stone a she-camel in the tenth month of pregnancy and carried a warning that the destruction of the camel or her young would be accompanied by the destruction of the tribe. The boat on the Tigris is from head to foot, that is, from stern to stern like this she-camel because it carries passengers and saves them from destruction. The serpent of Moses is the boisterous water which engulfs victims.

Such then is the utilitarian value of Khaqani's *diwan*. It is a misnomer to call his *diwan* a book of poems. For it is not merely a book of poems. Rather, it is an encyclopaedia, a reference catalogue, a dictionary, a vast repository of the

learning of the East. And, like the learning of the East, unbound, unindexed, disarranged.

### III

Khaqani's poetry is highly conventional : everything beautiful coming from China, Chinese idols, Chinese painting, Chinese deer, Chinese spring ; full of stock epithets ( moon face, cypress stature, ruby lips ) ; when the rose is mentioned the nightingale is not far away ; and when the candle is mentioned, the moth is safely or rather dangerously near. Rich in detail, it is richer in archaic allusions. There are eight paradises of ruby, pearl, chrysolite, coral, silver, gold, musk and lustrous pearl. The earth is flat with eight mountain-chains of Qaf, alternating with seven seas, whereof the innermost is the circumambient sea ( *bahr-i-mubîr* ). At first the earth was unstable, tossing like a ship, so an angel was made to support it on his shoulders ; and under the angel is a mighty rock, and under the rock a great bull, and under the bull a great fish, and under the fish an ocean, and under the ocean the seven stages of hell, and under those a tempestuous wind, and under that a darkness, and under that a veil, and beyond this the knowledge of man goeth not, not even the knowledge of Khaqani.

This cosmogony goes hand in hand with cosmography. Around the central stationary earth are seven concentric spheres, "like the coats of an onion", namely of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Then comes the sphere of the fixed stars ; then the sphere of spheres ( *falak-ul-aflāk* or *charkh-i-gardūn* ). The eight spheres revolve slowly from west to east, whilst the ninth whirls them all round in the opposite direction once in twenty-four hours. The ceaseless rush of the ninth sphere causes sudden changes in the position of the planets, and as worldly affairs are controlled by the relative position of the planets to one another, the ninth sphere which causes ever-shifting positions of the planets, must be regarded as evil. Hence

the unanimous condemnation of the ninth sphere : "fie upon thee, O circling heaven, fie."

A poetry which wantons in every kind of ambiguity and artificial conceit must be unnatural. But Khaqani was a genius : very artificial in his artificiality ; very sincere in his sincerity. As is well known, the Arabs sacked the Sasanian capital, Ctesiphon or Madā'in in 637 A. D. with the war-cry : This is the white palace of the Chosroes. The sack continued, off and on, till early Abbasid times. To obtain building material for his new capital of Baghdad, the Caliph al-Mansur decided to destroy the Sasanian palace known as the *Aiwan-i-Kisra*. For three days, therefore, the workmen hammered at the Sasanian palace ; but it was made of tough material and it resisted the pickaxe. Thereupon the Caliph turned to his premier, Khālid, who had previously dissuaded him from destroying the palace, and said : "We have now come over to your point of view, for we find that the cost of destruction is even greater than the value of the building material we can obtain." "I now advise you," said Khālid, "to continue the work of destruction lest it be said of you hereafter that you were not even able to destroy what another was able to construct." Fortunately the premier's advice was again disregarded ; but time and neglect continued the work of destruction so that when Khaqani, on his way to the pilgrimage during the caliphate of al-Muqtafi or al-Mustadi, visited Madā'in, the capital and its *Aiwan-i-Kisra* ( the Hall of Audience ) was a heap of ruins. Says Ibn-i-Hishām in his biography of the Prophet Muhammad :

"Now Khusraw Anushirwan used to sit in his Hall of Audience where was a golden crown like unto a mighty cask, set with rubies, emeralds and pearls, suspended by a chain of gold from the top of an arch in his Audience Hall. And his neck could not support the crown, but he was veiled by draperies till he had taken his seat on the throne and had inserted his head

within the crown whereupon the draperies were withdrawn. And no one looked upon him without kneeling in reverence before him."

Now as Khaqani looked upon the ruins of this Hall, the past rose up out of the dark before him, spread like a picture before his eyes, and breathed like a tale into his ears. Persian literature has no nobler example to offer than Khaqani's threnody on Madā'in or Ctesiphon. The words are ordinary but they are employed with extraordinary effect : there is no composing of verse ; there is no writing of poetry. There is perception and emotion and impulse—and the words come forth, like sunrise from the sea, like the break of dawn.

"Draw thyself awhile from the Tigris bank to Ctesiphon  
and with the river in thy eye water Ctesiphon  
with a second Tigris.

The Tigris herself weeps a hundred blood-streams issuing  
from the ruddy furnace of her eyes.

Dost thou see the bubbles of foam on the Tigris'  
breast—the blisters on her lips raised with the  
fume of her sighs.

Were the Tigris to mingle the frost of her sighs with  
the fire of her heart, half of her would freeze  
like ice, and half of her leap like flame.

The Tigris a liquid leaping flame ? Nay, parted from  
the royal House behold how like a wounded  
snake she draws her slow length along.

Deep is the air and dark, black, substantial, an ebon  
mass : the hooting of the owl alone piercest it.

Oh what will be the fate of the Halls of Oppression  
when this has been the fate of the Hall of  
Justice ?

This is the Yard whose carved lions subdued the Lion  
of the Sky.

This is the Hall whose glitter came from coronets and  
crowns.

This is the Chamber whose Chamberlains ruled over  
Babel and Turkistan.

Whither have they gone ? Lions and pages and crowns ;  
Khusraw and Parwiz and Shirin.

Shirin's blood is the juice of thy grape ; Parwiz's dust  
is thy pitcher of wine."

"Why may not imagination," says Hamlet, "trace the noble dust  
of Alexander till he find stopping a bung-hole ? . . . Alexander died,  
Alexander was buried, Alexander returned into dust ; the dust  
is earth : of earth we make loam ; and why of that loam whereto  
he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel ?"

Khaqani's poetry is like jewels in a casket ; and appreciation demands that the jewels be removed from the casket and held up to solar light.



# BEFORE THE SUN RISES

A. Aronson

## I

BUT we shall not be alone :  
the knocking at the door and the ringing of the phone  
will find us wide awake  
in the early hours—before the sun rises ;  
we shall go to the cupboard and take  
a shirt and a warm suit for the evening,  
and then we shall stand and pray  
near the window where the shadows fight  
and we shall look across the trembling towers  
towards the pale and fast receding night.

But we shall not be alone  
in those tormented morning hours :  
we shall hear from across the street  
people pray and cry and groan  
and we shall see them marching  
with heavy and sleepless feet  
towards the dark doors of churches  
that were open all night.

It is good to kneel down and to know  
that the hours of fear and anguish are past  
and that some one will have mercy upon us,  
that there are crosses that will stand and last  
in the morning and the evening,  
in springtime when all the years meet  
and in winter when the shadows bleed ;  
it is good that we are not alone  
on the crooked and twisted and narrow street.

But how shall we pray,  
we who are used to the silverscreen  
and the close-up smile on a vacant face  
in the flickering light of moving space,

we who have known and heard and seen  
the fighting shadows under many crosses,  
their battle-cry after so many losses,  
their silence on the judgment-day ;  
we who are awake before the sun rises,  
before the knocking at the door and the ringing  
of the phone,  
how shall we stand near the window and pray,  
we who are never alone  
before the cross.

## II

This is the hour of the smoky day  
rising behind a block of city-flats  
in which a thousand hungry souls  
wait for the windy dawn and pray ;  
the heavy boots of firing-squads  
cut the morning into rhythmic fears  
and echo across half-deserted squares  
in the city that fell at dawn.

A thousand hungry souls have lain awake  
all through the parabolic night,  
have shaped and changed their decisions  
with the coming and going of tank-divisions,  
have sat with yellow books by candle-light,  
with withered words of war blown by the rain  
against the whirlpool of their drowning brain,  
and they have thought and felt and known  
it all along : this is the hour  
of the falling and dying generation,  
the windy hour of desolation  
in the city that fell at dawn.

A thousand hungry souls have prayed in vain  
for some bitter hope and consolation ;

in gnawing numbness they have lain  
across the darkness and the evil power.  
And now they listen to the firing-squads  
from thousand curtain'd windows in their flats ;  
their trembling fingers grasp the gliding hour  
and count the smoky minutes of the day  
while heavy boots are trampling far-away  
a rhythm without tune, a twist, a turn . . .

The dry and sudden clap of thunder  
has torn a thousand souls asunder,  
and the hour that is, is a journey to no end,  
a power misused and a joy misspent.  
Over a thousand open graves the sky is bent  
in the city that fell at dawn.

### III

Look out : the sun is standing high  
in Vienna, Madrid, and Shanghai,  
the pavement is hot and dry . . .  
—Is man no more than this ?  
Round the corner there are corpses in the sun  
rotting in ignorance and peaceful bliss.  
They are no longer afraid to think  
what they have done.

—Make no noise, make no noise ;  
draw the curtains :  
In Vienna, Madrid and Shanghai  
noontime has come, the sun  
is a ring,  
a ring in the whiteness of the sky.  
Don't play about with forks and spoons,  
think of those that restlessly wander  
across the streets where the corpses lie

and bend their heads across so many afternoons.  
—What is the cause of thunder ?—  
tell me and draw the curtains,  
for I am afraid . . .

—We'll go to supper i' the morning  
in Vienna, Madrid, and Shanghai.  
You may be sure that I shall come and wait  
outside the house among the lifeless eyes ;  
there will be knocking at your gate,  
but you will not be afraid  
for I'll be standing in the shade  
looking up towards the cloudless sky.  
May-be a head will be rolling down the street  
trampled upon by heavy soldiers' feet—  
it does not matter in the least, my dear :  
we'll go to supper i' the morning—  
across the perforated limbs and rolling heads  
across the rails where engines boil and hiss  
we shall bend our heads and wander,  
tell me,—what is the cause of thunder ?  
and draw the curtains,  
—Is man no more than this ?—

Noontime has come. And the sun is a ring  
in Vienna, Madrid, and Shanghai.  
You are no longer afraid to think  
of lifeless eyes staring at the sky,  
you know all you have to know  
of putrefaction and desire,  
of lust, consumption, frozen fire,  
of eyes that in darkness glow.  
Behind the curtain you will sit and gaze  
through the long and dreary afternoons  
playing with golden forks and spoons  
and looking behind mirrors for your face.

## IV

Souls torn to pieces  
hanging in the wind to dry ;  
he plays with them carelessly  
throwing all the inhibitions  
up against the cloudless sky.  
There they are mended  
and made responsive  
according to taste and the four dimensions  
of the universe.

Some are too small and terse  
and must be enlarged  
to fit into a given pattern.  
Some outgrowing the natural wall  
of their former owner  
are re-adjusted  
in time and space  
and in a four-dimensional fall  
are put behind a human face.

But there are those that are without size  
loosing themselves in movement alone  
around a dead point where solution lies.  
Long life is not given them. The bone  
withers away below the skin and dies.  
On some misty winter afternoon  
you might have seen those terrifying eyes  
that speak of life too fast and death too soon.

Souls torn to pieces  
hanging in the wind to dry.  
Behind each soul  
look out the withered bones of a face  
wondering at time and space  
and the four dimensions of the sky.

## WHY KHADI\*

S. N. Mozumdar

WORK on khadi began in Orissa in 1922. By 1936 it was well on the cards that the organisation would be disbanded, for all that it could show by way of result was sales amounting to Rs. 17,000 for the whole year for the entire province of Utkal. What was worse, production amounted to the value of only Rs. 11,000 for the year. But in fact this state of affairs was due to the usual causes so common to difficult constructive work against odds in our country. Better organisation, the resultant efficiency and enthusiasm, aids and assistance have changed the shape of things quite remarkably. The figures of 1939 tell a different tale.

In that year the Utkal branch of the All India Spinners' Association, with two independent organisations carrying the Association's certificate, gave employment to 6,352 spinners. The wages earned by them amounted to Rs. 43,798 ; 1,78,000 yds. of khadi were produced worth Rs. 1,00,300 ; 358 weavers wove the khadi and earned Rs. 18,000 as wages.

Mere spinning did not exhaust the activity of the Association. A beginning was made in another direction, rearing of Eri and Tasar. And it would appear that the achievement of only a few months was not at all discouraging. 2,082 persons in 374 villages took to Eri rearing. Nearly 32 maunds of cocoon valued at Rs. 1,650 were produced. Some of this was spun, some sold, and the production of cloth was 210 yds. This was the result of a first attempt and was not recognised by the organisation as successful. The pleasing feature was that most of the Eri cloth was retained for personal use. Tasar-rearing prevails in the district of Sambalpore but is fast decaying. This

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\* The author, who is a member of the Indian Civil Service, was in charge of the direction of industries in Orissa under the Congress Government. He speaks therefore from first-hand experience. Though his conclusions are based on experience in Orissa, they have an obvious all-India significance.—*Ed.*

district is a great manufacturing centre of Tasar textile. It once used its own forest product, but now cocoons come mostly from the forests of the district of Singbhum in Bihar. Curiously enough, the rearing of Tasar is confined to a class of Harijans, and the poorest at that. Therefore the attempt of the A.I.S.A. to revive Tasar rearing in this district was a doubly welcome move : 393 rearers at only 5 centres earned Rs. 4,520.

Employment was thus provided in the year 1939 to 9,185 persons. They earned Rs. 67,968. But the point to remember is that the whole of this sum except the wages of the weavers amounting to Rs. 18,000, was supplementary income. It was earned by labour at home and at moments of leisure by men, women and children.

The question arises : has this enterprise been worthwhile ? The answer seems to be : Yes, everytime. The average man needs a supplementary income, and in Orissa the average man is a cultivator. He has enough leisure and to spare. Even a village artisan has. So have their families. What other occupation of general adaptability better suited to fill this leisure hour profitably is there than spinning ? Whether one uses a *takli* or a *charka*, the capital cost of the entire machinery of production will not exceed Rs. 5, and not one part of the machinery is such as cannot be easily replaced or repaired in the village or nearby, and in fact there is very little to go wrong. The work is not tiresome, interferes with nothing, be it gossip, exchange of pleasantries, serious thinking or a peaceful quietness of physical and mental rest. On the average a spinner earned Rs. 7 of additional income. One can safely challenge anybody, truly familiar with the economic condition of the rural population, to laugh derisively at this figure. To an average Oriya it is a fortune. One looks round in vain for a substitute spare-time employment of equally wide and general applicability of equal efficacy. When such a substitute, or even a number of substitutes, is placed before the country there will be time enough to question the utility of khadi or its easy competence

to provide two mouthfuls of food for the country's millions where now only one exists.

Khadi has at least, unlike the system of dole in the west, the merit of providing food with employment. Dole, a charity, kills the soul of the receiver for it gives no work. It will surprise many to learn that even as late as in June last with the greatest carnage in human history in full swing, England nursed over 7 lakhs of unemployed. The number of unemployed in India has never been estimated ; it can hardly be in a mainly agricultural country. But if unemployment means absence of opportunity to earn food by labour, the number of unemployed in India will run into a few crores. In an industrial country, a man without money in his pocket cannot get food. Therefore he attracts more notice. Such countries are more advanced, the people there have learnt to know their rights, to demand them of the State, they make themselves felt. The consequence is that they are maintained by the State. In India, the average man's roots are in land and perhaps he can still get a handful of rice to eat even if he possesses no money. He has not learnt that the State has a responsibility in the matter, his age-old instinct prompts him to put the blame on his fate, as his *karma*, and the result is that little fuss is made of our unemployed. But these millions that we know of, who have no employment either throughout the year, or a part thereof, or in a regular measure, what employment have we to offer them ? In Orissa, there are no large-scale industries worth the name. Those that exist are mostly the seasonal rice-mills. There are a couple of coal-fields, and perhaps the geological surveys now in progress may open up fields of further large-scale mechanized industries. But to what extent can they draw off the surplus population from agriculture ? Very little. At the present moment there are not even 5,000 skilled and unskilled labourers in all the registered factories of Orissa. Judging by the response a small scheme of electrification recently received in the province and outside it, the day of industrialisation of Orissa, even if adequate opportu-



nities presented themselves, seems distant. In the meanwhile why should we not adopt khadi and for the matter of that all our village industries, develop them, consolidate them, extend them to find work for our unemployed, to give food to them? What else can be done?

"But khadi is so expensive!"—petulantly complain the rich and the middle class. Normally, would not Indian mill-made cloth be dearer than the Japanese and the British? Indian sugar dearer than the Java sugar? Do we not pay more for our own steel and iron? Why? Because chiefly of our own inefficiency, because in these industrial ventures we have not yet attained the efficiency, experience and wisdom of the matured. It is the same with khadi. Our implements are not as efficient as they might be, our workers are still inefficient, our organisations weak, our methods perhaps unscientific. But these are remediable evils. Already signs of improvement are visible, and with increased efficiency there is no doubt that prices will fall.

The main cause of the rise in price is the increase in wages to the spinners. A minimum wage for labour is a world-recognised principle. All that the A. I. S. A. has done is to fix a minimum for the spinners as they needed the protection the most. And what is this minimum? Though practically the whole of the rise in price is due to this increase, the minimum is a bare -/3/- annas for a 8-hour day, or not even Rs. 6/- a month. It will greatly interest us to know that very recently it has been decided in Britain to raise the minimum wage of agricultural labour to 48 s. a week, allowing a rise of 11s.-13s. But no farmer can face such an increase in wages on present prices, so it was decided that there must be also an increase in the prices paid to the farmer for his produce. Here is a lesson for us to learn. As an interesting sidelight it may be mentioned here that one of the results hoped for, as the result of the rise in agricultural wages in Britain, is that there will be improvement in the standard of cottage accommodation provided for the

labourers. Anticipating this, county committees are being allowed to increase rent upto 12½% of the basic wage instead of the existing 3 s. , of course where improvements made justify it. One is also reminded of a drive made on behalf of British motor cars in India a few years ago. In a large industrial area upcountry with a large British population the most popular car was the Fiat. Within three years about 500 of these cars disappeared to make room for British cars and at a much higher price and with doubtful advantages, and in some cases with positive disadvantages. The appeal was based on finding employment for the country's workers. The population cheerfully paid the price to provide food for the hungry.

There is another aspect of this question. The average Oriya's measure of need in clothing is small, only a few pieces. The cloth used is coarse. The mill yarn imported into Orissa, where approximately Rs. 2 crores worth of textiles are woven in handlooms, is mostly the coarse count of 15 and 16's. He and his family can nearly produce their full requirement of cloth from their own spinning. The price of khadi is of no account to him. It also stands to reason that the spinner must himself use what he helps to produce. If he wants finer cloth it will be an incentive to him to produce finer yarn. If his wife or daughter fancies a particular design he can fulfil her desire, for perhaps his weaver lives in the same village or in the next. It is thus that newer and newer designs and patterns will be evolved by the people themselves enriching their innate sense of art. The old complaints against khadi that it is poor in quality and coarse in texture, monotonous in display are things of the past, and though Orissa is not yet in the forefront of the khadi world, she will soon occupy a place there. The Patsalia spinners of the Ganjam district produce with ease yarns of the fineness of 60 counts.

It is of great interest that spinning still survives in many parts of Orissa. The Patsalia spinners are all Telegu women in the Ganjam district. In the Parlakhemid region the Savaras spin the yarn of the beautiful tasseled loin cloth they wear. In

Gunupur spinning is universal amongst the aboriginal element. In other parts of Orissa it is not difficult in most of the villages to hunt out an old charka or two of the old days and women can still be found who are proficient in the art of spinning. And this is not surprising, for even now there are no less than 50,000 families of weavers in Orissa and the Oriya weavers' proficiency is well-known. Once the Oriya takes to spinning with zeal, the quality of yarn produced will cause no worry.

To the 50,000 weavers, khadi is the only solution of their main problem. With yarn available within easy reach, he will for once stand a reasonable chance of a fair competition with his rival the mills. At present it is his antagonist on whom he has to depend for his raw material. No wonder the cry ever is, "Babu, we cannot produce our goods at the price of the mills." Yet goods worth Rs. 2 crores are made in Orissa on the hand-looms and presumably consumed mainly inside the province. The reason is inefficiency of the mills, the advantage of the weaver of a market around his own village and comparative inaccessibility of some parts of the province. But with increasing efficiency of the sales-organisation of the manufacturing concerns, or their agents, and easier transport facilities to the backward parts, the weaver will inevitably be crushed. The obvious path to follow is that since spinning is proved to be the spare-time employment par excellence of the masses of the province, and because weavers in large numbers will be necessary for the utilisation of the yarns and since weaving as an industry already exists and ranks second to only agriculture in the province in giving employment to the population, such protection should be given to khadi as it may need to compete successfully with the mill products in the markets of Orissa. Protection of this nature to industries is common in this country and the world over. No industry can demand protection with greater justice than khadi which in Orissa within a period of barely two years has given employment to nearly 10,000 persons. Such protection comes legitimately from governments in the shape of financial

assistance, as was given to the A. I. S. A. by the Congress government of Orissa,—grants to introduce and improve cultivation of cotton, supply improved implements, for organisational work, as working capital, as a direct subsidy. Governments can undertake or assist in marketing. This the Orissa Government have undertaken. Government can also help in giving expert advisers, particularly in the field of evolving designs and patterns. But all these do not absolve the people of their responsibility in the matter. The Britisher all over the world helps his industries by actively patronising the products of his country, dearer though they invariably are than corresponding articles of other countries. And that is what we have to learn in India.

Decentralised production has been brought into the forefront of the picture which is being unfolded before us day by day by the war. The main targets of bombing are the centralised production centres to cripple the enemy. It is claimed that because the production centres of China are in the villages scattered over the country, that is principally why she still holds out against the Japanese in the face of overwhelming odds. Blankets and clothing for the Chinese army are being supplied by the cottage workers. It has saved the country. Is there any reason why we in India should not have one great industry of clothing the population under a decentralised organisation, especially when it will not only keep alive hundreds and thousands of our weavers spread all over the country but also provide employment and food to millions of our semi-starved countrymen by a spare-time occupation? Every mouthful of food we can add to the sum-total available counts in this country.

To the scoffer I present the following picture. It was late winter, and the day was not far advanced, about eleven. A road ran winding in and out of deep forests with patches of cultivation marking human habitations here and there. A neat little bamboo and thatch structure enclosing a small courtyard

stood within 50 feet of the road. There was an open gate leading into the courtyard and there waited small groups of men and women, mostly women. There was an eager and expectant look on their faces. An air of faint restlessness hung about them which was noticeable, being so uncommon in a waiting crowd in India. On the road was a steady stream of men, women, children, some with empty hands, others carrying loads, merchandise in carts, pack-animals or baskets, proceeding north, for it was the market day. Then a young man was seen cutting across the road towards the gate. A sigh of relief was audible amongst the waiting crowd, greetings were exchanged, smiles lit up their faces. The young man hurriedly went inside and came out with a book and sat on a *charpoy*. The crowd gathered around him, there were fumbings inside their clothing and out came in each hand bundles of cotton yarn, some small, some large, some medium. Eagerly these hands were thrust out towards the man. Each bundle he took, examined, weighed and noted in the book he held against an entry bearing the name of the man or woman who presented the bundle. Rapid arithmetical calculations were made by the young man in his head and out came a few nickel pieces or copper, as the case was, according to his calculations. Eagerly the man or woman clutched the coins and rushed out to the road joining the throng wending its way to the market. One such woman we followed. At the market she produced a small bottle with a loop of string on its neck. The oilman filled it half with mustard oil. A seller of ripe old tamarind sold her a small ball of de-seeded tamarind. Small fish neatly piled in a cup made of a few *kendu* leaves were 2 pice a cup. She bought two of these. That evening I long to dream there was happiness and contentment after the evening meal that she cooked for her little family of a husband and two little boys. As it happened it was the first square meal, and of tasteful quality, of that week.

## REVIEWS

*THE GOOD SHEPHERD* : by C. F. Andrews.

Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd. London.

Price 6/- net.

THE nucleus of this book, now published posthumously, is a course of lectures in Pastoral Theology delivered by Mr. Andrews at Cambridge in 1937 ; its theme may be stated in his own words as "the supreme need of quiet devotion in the pastoral work of the Church." The first part of it deals with the Christian experience of personal relationship with Christ as the Great Pastor, the Good Shepherd of the individual soul ; the second part discusses aspects of the disciple's relationships with his fellow-men as he seeks to obey the Master's command, "feed My sheep", and to lead them into the same fellowship with the Good Shepherd as he himself enjoys.

The book is addressed in the first place, like the lectures from which it originated, to those entering the regular ministry of the Christian Church ; but it has been so enlarged in scope that the greater portion of it is equally relevant to the needs of any man or woman with a serious sense of Christian vocation. It is written primarily for Great Britain, and envisages religious work in the social conditions that obtain there, and under the close shadow of war, but is immensely enriched by the writer's life-work in the East and the special concern for the "new lands" of the Dominions that sprang from his world tour of 1936.

In this last book C. F. Andrews argues no intellectual position, and concerns himself but little, directly, with the advocacy of any of the outward activities by which he himself, no less than others, sought to make practical application of his faith. Instead, like the apostle John, he declares to us with simple yet profound sincerity, what he has seen and known, and his hands have handled, of the Word of life. That Word is simply that no outward "efficiency" can be spiritually effective unless it is the fruit of time spent in the discipline of quiet and persevering prayer ; and that nothing can take the place of the daily "practice of the presence of God" in which he himself found his inspiration. In a moving passage he speaks of his longing that the Christian Church, now under the stress of war, should not lose this basic serenity in the feverish activities of superficial "national service", still less in the bitterness of national hate. In every context he repeats the spirit of the words of Jesus : "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But *one* thing is needful . . . . ."

There are many things in the book that should make a special appeal in India, in spite of what was said above about its primary purpose. One of the most striking is the story of the Himalayan shepherds which illuminates the verse "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." Another is the description of the influence on his life of the old Muslim saint who allowed no outward activity to encroach upon his prayer times. The emphasis on the life-giving freedom and joy of true religion reflects, one may surmise, the writer's long friendship with Rabindranath Tagore. The tender understanding of the difficulties of the poor, and the experience that underlies such a phrase as "the clean surgery of truth spoken in love", reveal the qualities that made him a friend and admirer of Mahatma Gandhi. The indictment of modern civilisation for its crowded restlessness and futility again owes much to Indian experience, and is all the more impressive for its restraint.

Those who know C. F. Andrews' former writings will expect that here as elsewhere he will have much to say that will "reach" men of prayer in all faiths, and they will not be disappointed. Such men will have shared from time to time in the experience of intimate communion and divine guidance, though they may not call the Giver by the name of Christ. In one passage, however, he seems to desire to dissociate himself from those who think of the Godhead as formless, impersonal spirit rather than as the mighty Personality which is the distinctive ( though not exclusive ) conception of Christian thought. "The flower of Heart's-ease," he writes, "is one that grows only in a glorious *companionship*, and not merely under the sway of an *influence* or energy."

Finally, the references towards the end of the book to the part played by Jesus in the national life of his people make keener our regret that the study of the Sermon on the Mount which Andrews was planning was left so incomplete at his death. The question was one which occupied his very close attention during the last months of his life, as his letters and conversation testified. As they stand, the references are sufficient to answer those who would accuse the writer of being too exclusively concerned, even in such a book as this, with individual piety.

Marjorie Sykes.

ছেলেবেলা ( *MY BOYHOOD DAYS* ) : by Rabindranath Tagore.

Visva-Bharati Book Shop, 210 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.

Price Re 1/8/- & Rs. 2/-.

THE author in his preface to this autobiography writes, that though its subject matter is somewhat similar to that of *My Reminiscences*, there is an intrinsic difference between the two. "If one is the lake the other is the mountain spring," says he. In *My Reminiscences* the portion dealing with the poet's early life occupies a position of secondary importance in the book itself. And necessarily so : the account given there is but a part of an indivisible whole, providing a suitable prologue leading on to an understanding of the ultimate development of the poet as we know him today. The child who is only the father of the man in *My Reminiscences* assumes the principal rôle in his own undisputed right in *My Boyhood Days*.

The book is a complete narrative by itself and needs no sequel. Starting from the earliest recollections the poet has given a fairly connected story of the various incidents of his life taking us right up to his student days in London. It is more than a story ; it is a sustained vision of a procession of days that are now no more, recalled by an aged poet in moments when he withdraws into himself and lives his past over again. *My Boyhood Days* is as much the story of a particular boy as it is the story of the boy in every one of us. Its appeal, as that of the *The Crescent Moon*, is particular and general at the same time.

And yet this story of a seemingly impersonal and universal boyhood has all the qualities that the best autobiographies should possess. The setting and the background are not merely interpretive, they are as real as the boy himself whom we almost see living and moving through the pages. Page after page the chequered light and shade of a poet's memory has created an artistic pattern which is intricate in its very simplicity. In no other prose work of his, barring perhaps *Broken Ties* ( *চতুর্দশ* ) has the author achieved so much with so little. Seen from other stand-points also, *My Boyhood Days* may very well take its place of honour in the history of Bengali prose style. As a specimen of pure colloquial prose whose *forte* lies in directness and uninvolved simplicity the book has set up a new precedent and has opened out newer possibilities.

One feels tempted to quote passage after passage to illustrate the inimitable charm of the author's narrative style, but it would be superfluous to do so here, as an English translation of the book is being published in this very issue of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*. Miss Marjorie Sykes ( of Santiniketan ) is to be congratulated on her excellent rendering of the original into English.

Kshitish Roy.



*OUR INDIA* : By Minoo Masani. Illustrated by C. H. G. Moorhouse.

Published by Oxford University Press, ( Indian Branch ),

October 1940. Price Rs. 2—12 As.

WHEN Minoo Masani retired from the field of active politics the fact was regretted. He was a bright unit of a group of young socialists who were making themselves felt in political India. But Masani has reappeared in another field and, on the whole, India is the richer for it.

It is a delightful and valuable book of 165 pages that he has produced with telling illustrations, associated these days with works of M. Ilin on achievements of Soviet Russia. Written primarily for boys and girls, the book is equally profitable reading to the grown-ups.. Within a small compass Masani has drawn a picture of India never sketched before.

"We are looking forward, and not back," is what he says, a very healthy pastime for the youth of the country. He tells the reader what India is, what she has, her potentialities and the way in which the rich store of materials that make real wealth can be utilised to make the country a land of plenty for all. All this set out in a refreshing style, in attractively simple language with profuse illustrations. Within 165 pages of this book there are 100 illustrations.

The little book tells in broad outlines what the country's resources are, where we fail to make full use of them, the correct balance between agriculture and industries, and between the different forms of the latter. Man to man an Indian is not inferior to the best in the world, the country is rich beyond measure, nature is bountiful, and yet why is the country a land of tears? Why does the farmer produce so little, why is there not enough milk to go round when we possess a third of the cattle in the world, why in the land of snow peaks and mighty rivers do crops suffer from drought in some part or other of the country every year, why does the farmer burn his agricultural capital in dung-manure into ashes in his hearth, why is there not enough wood for use as fuel, why does India export cotton and import cotton fabrics—these and many another are the questions he asks of his readers and answers for them. He tells us how rich we are in our mineral wealth, that we can go on digging coal at the rate we are doing for over 2000 years, how we are wasting every year some 30 million gallons of coal-tar rich in motor spirits and light oils, how poor is our utilisation of the wonderful store of iron ores, to what little benefit to our country do we turn the great deposits of manganese ore and instead ship more and more of it out to other countries, and so on with the other valued underground treasures.

We pay, he reminds us, £ 20 million every year as the price of things we buy from Europe. What little use we make of Power in India, he throws in clear perspective by stating that, whereas in Norway water power alone provides 700 horse-power of electricity for every 1,000 people, it is just 1 in India. "We Indians are allowing what we possess to run to waste in a very foolish way. That is because we do not try to plan our country's life. We live higgledy piggledy, from day to day, and from hand to mouth . . . ." The author ends the book with a picture of India Tomorrow, a picture that should allure the heart of all youths.

Of a book so well written one feels that there should be no criticism. But there is just one small point which might be mentioned here. Averages in statistics have their utility but only where they do not cloud the picture. Unfortunately, the figures of average income and of duration of life introduce an undesirable element of unreality. The talented author, I have no doubt, will have no difficulty in making this part of his picture as vivid without these statistics in the succeeding editions which one can safely prophecy for this book.

There is need for translations of this book in all the principal Indian languages. The book should be in the hands of every boy and girl in our schools.

It is to be hoped that many more books of this type will come out of Minoo Masani's pen in future. But will he make them hundred per cent Swadeshi by illustrations from home-made talents ?

S. N. Mozumdar, I.C.S.

### *THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH :*

by M. K. Gandhi, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad,

Second Edition, 1940. Price Rs. 4/-.

Pp. xviii 636, ten illustrations.

IN its first edition, the Autobiography was published in two volumes priced at Rs. 5/8/- each. It was a library edition, and consequently took about eleven years to run out. In its Gujrati original, the autobiography has already run through five editions covering 50,000 volumes. It was therefore keenly felt that a cheaper English edition ought to be placed upon the market ; and the publishers must be congratulated on the way in which they have produced the present work.

It is a complete reprint in a single volume of the previous two English volumes, along with the addition of ten plates which were absent in the

former edition. The price is very moderate, the size handy ; and, we are sure, the book will be welcomed by those who wish to understand Gandhiji more thoroughly, as well as among that larger circle of readers who love to read a remarkably sincere and penetrating story of a great man's life.

Nirmal Kumar Bose.

*MORE ABOUT THE HEREAFTER*: by Mrs. Rhys

Davids, M. A. D. Litt.,

( Psychic Review Ltd., London, 1939 ).

THIS appears to be the latest work from the pen of a distinguished writer whose name is already familiar, along with that of her husband—the late Prof. Rhys Davids, as an authority in the *Pali Buddhism*. They have both done an invaluable service for an old and almost world-wide faith, which had its birth over five centuries before the Christian era, by the publication, as also by English translation, of some of the noted works in the literature of what is considered to be the earlier phase of Buddhism. A book of the present sort, bearing a queer name, from one of the writers was naturally expected to be on a certain aspect or doctrine of the Thought they so prominently represent. But that is not the impression the work gives, at least directly. A closer view would, however, disclose some indirect connection of the subject treated here with an aspect of the teachings of Buddha as understood and interpreted by the present writer. In fact, a suspicion arises in the mind, whether the view which the author has of late given out in her work—*What is the Original Gospel in Buddhism*—has not had its origin in the studies embodied in the work under review. It may be, on the contrary, that the main trend of the subject of this work had its orientation in the new interpretation that she offers now of some of the doctrines of the earlier Buddhism. At any rate the two books furnish some clue to each other, so far as the problem about the life of man after one leaves this earth is concerned. The problem is no doubt a serious one for all faiths which recognise a “survival after bodily death.” We find the same problem is most prominently emphasised in our *Kathopanisad* beginning with a dialogue between the boy *Nuchiketas* and the *Yamaraja*—the King of the Hades. The way the present author has introduced the subject and treated elaborately, offering references to the scriptures of different faiths, particularly Christianity and Buddhism, on the matter and giving out boldly what she believes to be true in fact on her personal experiences, makes the work, not simply interesting, but also deeply significant—if it is really a true account of man's life on earth and

thereafter. Much of what she records as testimonies, coming from the statements made by eminent men who have long or lately left this earth, but have now a "more" or better life in a plane beyond, might appear to an ordinary reader to be rather "fantastic." But there is no mistake about the seriousness with which the author has undertaken this task in an age which is so sceptical about these matters. She appears to be so convinced of the truth about the facts recorded and the conclusions drawn therefrom, that she is prepared even to face any opprobrium or opposition. In view of this attitude of mind with which she has published this work, one is bound to pause before offering any off-hand criticism arising from one's cherished beliefs or ideas. And Mrs. Rhys Davids is not a personage, whose opinions can be so easily brushed aside. She is well-known for her saintly life and integrity of thought and writings. As to the subject under consideration, she herself states that she has devoted twenty years of her life to its study and investigation, beginning with a sceptical attitude and ending with a firm conviction of the views laid down in the work. It is difficult therefore to offer any opinions, for or against, on the part of one who is outside the circle of *Psychical Researchers*. Yet the author does not appear to have approached the subject as a mere curious student of psychical research. Her comparative studies of the scriptures of the principal Faiths and religious works on the subject of the Hereafter, particularly Christianity and Buddhism, have brought the problem, as she avers, prominently into her mind, and led her to undertake serious investigation about the problem on the lines of researches hitherto made and carry on the same work further in support of the conclusions thereof, with fresh evidences obtained by personal experiences and careful "experiments" (if we may so use the term) in the so-called "psychical" field. About this field, there is still much honest ignorance and lingering prejudice. What is called the "mental life", as hitherto studied in the west and recorded in the current text-books, is but the beginning of the study and remains still in a state of struggle with old and cherished ideas. The subject needs a wider outlook and freedom of approach in order to be able to say definitely what exactly is the nature and operations of the mind studied from its deeper levels and wider expressions. A new orientation is required here for the purpose. And one wonders if the present-day studies in the field of religious psychology would offer ultimately a glimpse of the underlying nature of the mental life. Buddhism is found to be particularly rich in studies of this field. But the ideas are so queer there and the methods of analysis so unfamiliar to the ordinary level of mental attitude, as also to the so-called "scientific" students of the mental life, that it may be considered as almost hoping against hope that any serious

approach to the subject would be readily undertaken, unless and until the old ideas are shaken off, and a serious research in this unfamiliar field be undertaken under a sound inspiration of the spiritual sort. However, to return to the subject under review, Mrs. Rhys Davids is found to have undertaken the work, not simply with the purpose of offering a glimpse into the sort of life a man is supposed to enter after the present earthly one and the struggles continued thereinto for the "betterment" of further existence. She is particular also to suggest, on the basis of her convictions, the sort of life a man should live on earth, so as to "fare well" hereafter. Man's life is essentially a life of the spirit, and life of the spirit is a life of "becoming", in which man is free to advance further and further in order to be true to his or her real and inner self. This is the substance of her sound advice. Unfortunately this is what man is apt to forget in this life, and to suffer the consequences. It is hoped the glimpse which the author gives here of the life to come hereafter, if true in fact, would be a valuable lesson to humanity—a lesson which humanity needs badly in the present-day materialist tendencies and prevailing sceptical ideas. We wish heartily that the work may find the appreciation and welcome reception, which it deserves to have.

P. B. Adhikari.

### *ARABIC THOUGHT AND ITS PLACE IN HISTORY :*

By Dr. De Lacy O'leary, D.D. Published by Kegan Paul,  
Trench, Trubner & Co., London.

Revised Edition 1939, pp. 327 ; Price 12/- Shillings.

THIS is the second revised edition of Dr. O'leary's work, which first appeared in 1922. There are views of very conflicting character as to the nature, origin, progress and ultimate achievement of Hellenistic influence on the cultural life of early Muslims, which found its way into the Islamic world through Syriac channels. Of the transmission of Hellenistic thought into the Muslim world, we have no doubt, but it is still a matter of opinion as to whether the nucleus of Latin Scholasticism introduced any remarkable changes into the religious life and thought of the Arabs. The neo-Platonists represented a very high standard of intellectual life and the cultural centres of the "classic age" at Athens imparted philosophical and scientific knowledge to the East, and even as early as in the fourth century, the Greek philosophy had crossed the Aegean waters and come into Syria, where in 310 A. D. at Nisibis a school was established by a band of Nestorian refugees, who had fled from the persecutions of the intolerant

home church ; but neither the Nestorian schism, which is acclaimed as the stronghold of Greek culture till 439 A. D., when emperor Zeno expelled them, nor did the seven neo-Platonist philosophers, driven out of their homes by Justinian to the court of Nushirwan in 532 A. D., with their semi-philosophical, semi-missionary activities throughout Central Asia down to Arabia, succeeded in permeating the theological life of Islam. Much emphasis is laid on the Arab reception of Aristotelian philosophy and on the Mu'tazilites, whose doctrines are said to be "remodelled and propagated under the influence of the philosophy of Aristotle" ( Dozy's *L' Islamisme* in Chauvin's French translation, pp. 205-207 ), but, strange as it may appear, all the chief exponents of this school viz., al-Fārābi, Ibn Sinā, Ibn Rushd and others, were devout Muslims, who did not dare assail the fundamental principles of the Faith. The breach between philosophy and dogma, to a certain extent, was undoubtedly affected by them, but it is quite preposterous to think with Dr. O'leary that "the Aristotelian philosophy was received by the Muslim world as a revelation supplementing the Quran" ( p. 123 ).

We can well believe Steiner ( *Die Mu'taziliten oder Freidenker im Islam*, p. 5 ) when he says that "the Arabian Aristotelians were properly rather Natural Scientists than philosophers", their most signal achievement belongs to the region of observation of natural phenomenon, above all medicine and astronomy, but they never succeeded in disintegrating the traditional theology of Islam. The Muslim interest in Greek philosophy, which resulted in the translation of a large number of works into Arabic, was purely academic rather than philosophical, hence we feel constrained in agreeing with Dr. O'leary when he says : "Thus the Quran and Aristotle were read together as supplementing one another in perfect good faith, but inevitably the conclusions, and still more perhaps the method of Greek philosophy, began to act as a powerful solvent on their traditional beliefs" ( p. 123 ).

Even the theory of neo-Platonic origin of mysticism is as much doubtful as the association of its fundamental doctrines exclusively with Vedantism or Buddhism, and here Dr. O'leary has been over-zealous in establishing his hypothesis. To take an example, he describes *Tawhīd* or the doctrine of Unification as "the final union of the soul with God" ( p. 192 ) in a way closely resembling the neo-Platonic teaching and wrongly adds that the exercise of intuitive faculty of reason is not essential for its attainment. He goes a step further in the misrepresentation of the doctrine of *Halul* or incarnation which he calls as "*Tawhīd* taking place in this present life" ; undoubtedly he is quoting from the *Kitāb al-Tawāsin*, when he remarks that here "the deity of God enters the human soul in the same way that

the soul at birth enters the body." This teaching, according to his conviction, is "a fusion of old pre-Islamic Persian beliefs as to incarnation and the philosophical theories of neo-Platonism" ( p. 193 ). He adds : "This is an extremely interesting illustration of the fusion of Oriental and Hellenistic elements in Sufism, and shows that the theoretical doctrines of Sufism, whatever they may have borrowed from Persia and India, receive their interpretative hypotheses from neo-Platonism" ( pp. 193-194 ).

Similarly the doctrine of *Fana*, which is universally admitted on all hands to be of Indian origin, has been exclusively associated with teaching of the neo-Platonists, a fact which the author has failed to establish. In the case of the doctrine of "unitive state", he is quite uncertain whether it was borrowed from Buddhism, Gnosticism or neo-Platonism, but strange, as it may appear, he says : "But in this as in other parts of Sufi speculation it seems that the constructive theory employed in forming a theological system was neo-Platonic : even in mysticism the Greek mind exercised its influence in analysing and constructing hypotheses" ( p. 201 ).

Bikrama Jit Hasrat.

*THE FOUNDATIONS OF LIVING FAITHS*—An Introduction to Comparative Religion : by Dr. Haridas Bhattacharya, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S.

Head of the Department of Philosophy, University  
of Dacca. Published by the University  
of Calcutta, 1938.

THIS is the First Volume embodying six Lectures the learned author delivered at the Calcutta University during the closing months of the year 1934 under the *Stephanas Nirmalendu Ghosh* Lectureship. The second volume, which has not perhaps been published yet ( at least it has not been sent to us yet for review ) is to contain the remaining five lectures. The present volume begins in the first chapter with the question of the origin of Religion and its value in individual and social life of man and allied subjects, and goes on, in the next two chapters, to treat critically of the *role* of Prophets, as distinguished from that of mere Preachers and Reformers of religion, and their relationship to Revelations—illustrating from some of the Living Faiths how they have shaped the growth of religious development differently among different peoples in the course of their cultural life. The treatment of the various matters coming up in connection with them has been, not simply thorough but also admirable, and the critical attitude maintained throughout the discussions in these chapters is marked

by wide sympathy and true appreciation of the comparative value of the different Faiths in whose growth the said features have been prominent. The remaining chapters of this volume are devoted, rather by way of illustrations, to the conception of Gods ( or of God ) in Hinduism in its Vedic and post-Vedic or Pauranic periods, God in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and lastly God in Zoroastrianism—both Gathic and post-Gathic. The second volume is to treat, on similar lines, of Buddhism and Jainism, and of the three religions of what the author calls the Mongolian Group—*Confucianism*, *Taoism* and *Shintoism*. We can say nothing definitely as yet how he has dealt with these living faiths and how far he has been able to extend his theories of religious origin and development to them, until we have gone through the volume not in hand yet. But from what we find to be the characteristic mode of treatment of the subjects in the first volume, we doubt not that the same masterly way of handling has been extended to the contents of the second volume. And the spirit of criticism, as expressed by the author in the following lines in the Preface, has been, in our opinion, carried out truly there as in the whole course of the lectures before us : “My criticisms have proceeded from a genuine conviction that all the living religions possess good points—some more, some less—of which they may be legitimately proud, but that none is perfect in spite of all that its adherents may claim on its behalf and that they are capable of development in diverse degrees and directions. This is why I have been constrained to criticise more than once the doctrine of Final Revelation, which, inspite of its value for social solidarity, is a serious obstacle to the development of individual faith and communal toleration.” This shows evidently the objective nature of the attitude with which he has approached the history of the different Faiths treated in the work and an impersonal and sympathetic outlook on their treatment and evaluation. The author has not simply gone to the root and origin of the different faiths treated, but has also taken a wide and cautious view of the particular circumstances which have influenced the growth of every one of them. This is the historical part of his work. But his treatment is not merely historical. The role of a writer on comparative religion, we think, is somewhat, if not entirely, different from that of a mere historian. A comparative study is not worth its name, if it leaves out a true and adequate evaluation of religion in its historical growth. He has to bear in mind the truth, so widely illustrated in the history of human culture, about the difference between origin and value, and nothing is so unpardonable in a writer as to judge of the value of any item of human culture merely by referring to its low origin. The application of Spencerian theory of Evolution



is undoubtedly inapplicable to this field, if not elsewhere. An evolution of the emergent type finds an apt illustration here. Our learned author's whole treatment is marked by this character. He has not simply played the part of a historian, but the true role of a comparative student of religious faiths as well. There are many histories of religion in the field already ; their number is rather growing. But we find very few works in English on comparative Religion. The present work in its two volumes will, it is hoped, remove a long-felt want in this respect. It is bound to be a standard work on the subject, and as such it should find a place in the curricula of studies in any University, Indian or foreign, which offers the subject of comparative study of religions as one of its post-graduate subjects.

P. B. Adhikari.

*CO-OPERATIVE FARMING* : S. K. Dey, I.C.S. Published by  
Indira Devi, Collector's House, Nadia.  
Price Re 1/-.

THIS book embodies, as the author says, "the theory and practice of a scheme being tried in a Bengal District."

Three co-operative farming societies have been organised but had not been registered till the time of publication of the book. It was in the middle of April last, barely 6 months before the book was published that these farming organisations were given the start. The farms have a comprehensive plan of rich double-cropping. In the circumstances is it not surprising that the author, a member of the Indian Civil Service, should rush into print so prematurely ? Undoubtedly it is an interesting experiment and the author has zeal. But he will better serve the interest of agricultural advancement if he would wait till a proper rotational programme of cultivation has been worked out on the farms in 4 or 5 years and then publish the results. When, if at all he does so, he will be well advised to let the facts speak for themselves, and, alongside, give a complete picture of the lands in the farms, their character, tenure, and the facilities provided for cultivation. These will give a proper setting to judge the results.

"Krushak-Bandhn".

# The Visva-Bharati Quarterly

Vol. VI, Part IV, New Series

Feb. 1941—April 1941.

## CONTENTS

The Bird-Men ( Poem )	Rabindranath Tagore	285
Civilisation and Progress	Rabindranath Tagore	287
Indictment ( Poem )	Rabindranath Tagore	298
How far do I believe in Gandhism	Nirmal Kumar Bose	299
Memories	Sreemati Krishna Huthesing	311
Dostoevsky : A Revaluation	Dr. A. Aronson	317
Dārā Shikuh	Bikrama Jit Hasrat	331
Gandhi Maharaj ( Poem )	Rabindranath Tagore	346
Mukta-Dhārā ( An appreciation )	K. R. Kripalani	347
Mukta-Dhārā ( A Drama )	Rabindranath Tagore	351
Reviews		373

## ILLUSTRATIONS

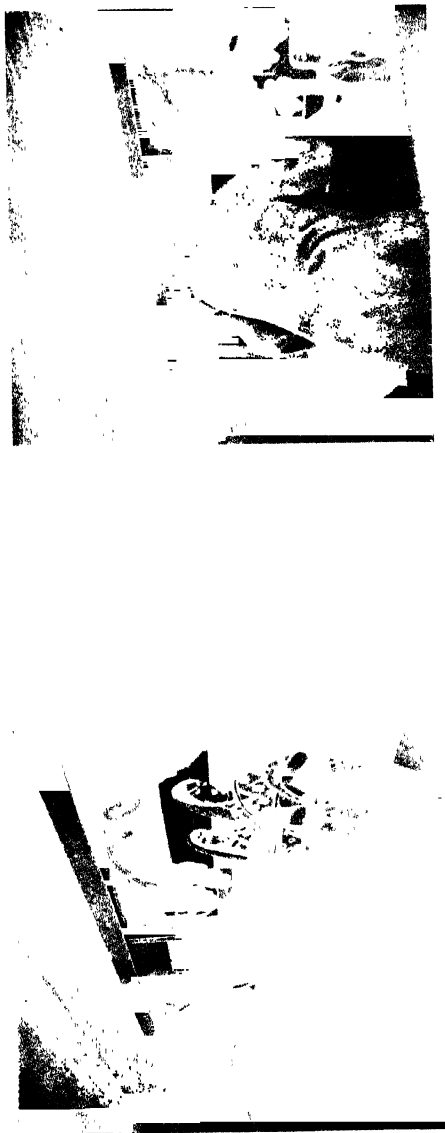
Mural Painting	By Nandalal Bose	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Animal Agony	By Rabindranath Tagore	<i>Facing Page</i> 298
A Landscape	By Benode Behari Mukherjee	„ 316
A Photograph of Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhiji	„	346







Mural Painting by Nandalal Bose in Baroda Kirti Mandir. Original size - 22' x 4' Subject : Life of Mira Bai.



The artist with his students at work

## Frescoes Illustrating the Life of Mirabai

On the opposite page is a miniature reproduction of a series of four frescoes done by Sri Nandalal Bose on the walls of the Kirti-Mandir, at Baroda, illustrating the principal stages in the spiritual life of Mirabi, the well known woman-mystic of Rajputana.

The first fresco depicts her at her private devotions in the family shrine meditating on her Girdhar Gopal : *My all-in-all is Girdhar Gopal besides whom I have none.*

In the second, she is shown as one who has withdrawn herself from the ways of the world for His sake : *I have given up my all ; why dost Thou, O Lord, then still tarry ?*

In the third, she is seen among the saintly singers of the name of God, singing : *Keep me, O Lord, as thy servant ; I shall tend thy garden.*

In the fourth, she is shown as standing on the sea-shore at Dwarka with the Temple, the symbol of the Eternal, in the distance, singing : *He is my comrade in life and death ; I remember Him day and night ;* while her two companions are seen engaged in their daily decoration of the hut of Mirabai, during her absence from it on her quest of God.



# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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February

*New Series, Vol. VI, Part IV*

1941

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## THE BIRD-MEN\*

OVER earth and waters has he triumphed,  
and now the Demon of Machines  
has fashioned birds of men  
to conquer the heights as well.

The birds—so colourful, so joyous,  
companions of multi-coloured clouds—  
are fashioned by the artists in Paradise ;  
to the blue sky and strong winds  
are they kin.

They sport to the rhythm of the breeze,  
they sing to the tune of unconfined space,  
their awakenings harmonize  
with the coming of the dawnlight  
to the warbling woods.

The flutter of their gay wings  
ripples on the vast sea of calm  
under the vast sky.  
From ages immemorial,  
coursing through the pathways of the sky,

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\* Translated from the original Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore ( পক্ষীমানব in দ্বিজাভিষেক, 1940 ) by Kshitish Roy.



have they brought the message of life  
to the woods and hills.

Today sheer defiance has spread its wings,  
and arrogant in its pride of power  
the lifeless machine soars,  
—unblest by the gods,  
unacknowledged by the sun and the moon ;  
disowning the very sky, it zooms overhead  
desecrating the air with its strident roar.

Man's profanity rides the region of clouds,  
defiling with unholy glee  
the very light of heaven.  
The doom has come at last  
and discord hurls itself like thunder,  
reckless, unchecked and uncontrolled.

Malice feeds the flame of death  
and terror spreads from shore to shore.  
If in the midst of this flaming ruin  
God finds not His own true seat,  
then, O Lord of Thunder, my God,—  
let the very last chapter of this story  
come to its finale  
in the fiery wrath of Rudra.

Out of her affliction, the world prays,  
“Let green groves resound over again  
with the rapture of birdnotes.”

*Rabindranath Tagore*

## CIVILISATION AND PROGRESS\*

Rabindranath Tagore

A CHINESE author writes : "The terrible tragic aspect of the situation in China is that, while the Chinese nation is called upon to throw away its own civilisation and adopt the civilisation of modern Europe, there is not one single educated man in the whole Empire who has the remotest idea of what this modern European civilisation really is."

The word "civilisation" being a European word, we have hardly yet taken the trouble to find out its real meaning. For over a century we have accepted it, as we may accept a gift horse, with perfect trust, never caring to count its teeth. Only very lately we have begun to wonder if we realise in its truth what the western people mean when they speak of civilisation. We ask ourselves, "Has it the same meaning as some word in our own language which denotes for us the idea of human perfection?"

Civilisation cannot merely be a growing totality of happenings that by chance have assumed a particular shape and tendency which we consider to be excellent. It must be the expression of some guiding moral force which we have evolved in our society for the object of attaining perfection. The word 'perfection' has a simple and definite meaning when applied to an inanimate thing, or even to a creature whose life has principally a biological significance. But man being complex and always on the path of transcending himself, the meaning of the word 'perfection' as applied to him, cannot be crystallised into an inflexible idea. This has made it possible for different races to have different shades of definition for this term.

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\* We are glad to reprint this article which was originally delivered as a lecture in China during the Poet's tour in 1924, and first published in "Talks in China" in 1925. The relevance of the author's analysis of modern civilisation was never more obvious than today. What he prophesied then is happening before our eyes.—Ed.

The Sanskrit word *dharma* is the nearest synonym in our own language, that occurs to me, for the word civilisation. In fact, we have no other word except perhaps some newly-coined one, lifeless and devoid of atmosphere. The specific meaning of *dharma* is that principle which holds us firm together and leads us to our best welfare. The radical meaning of this word is the essential quality of a thing.

*Dharma* for man is the best expression of what he is in truth. He may reject *dharma* and may choose to be an animal or a machine and thereby may not injure himself, may even gain strength and wealth from an external and material point of view ; yet this will be worse than death for him as a man. It has been said in our scriptures : *Through a-dharma ( the negation of dharma ) man prospers, gains what appears desirable, conquers enemies, but perishes at the root.*

One who is merely a comfortable money-making machine does not carry in himself the perfect manifestation of man. He is like a gaudily embroidered purse which is empty. He raises a rich altar in his life to the blind and deaf image of a yawning negation and all the costly sacrifices continually offered to it are poured into the mouth of an ever hungry abyss. And, according to our scriptures, even while he swells and shouts and violently gesticulates, he perishes.

The same idea has been expressed by the great Chinese sage, Lao-tze, in a different manner, when he says : *One who may die, but will not perish, has life everlasting.* In this he also suggests that when a man reveals his truth he lives, and that truth itself is *dharma*. Civilisation, according to this ideal, should be the expression of man's *dharma* in his corporate life.

We have for over a century been dragged by the prosperous West behind its chariot, choked by the dust, deafened by the noise, humbled by our own helplessness, and overwhelmed by the speed. We agreed to acknowledge that this chariot-drive was progress, and that progress was civilisation. If we ever ventured to ask, "Progress towards what,

and progress for whom?"—it was considered to be peculiarly and ridiculously oriental to entertain such doubts about the absoluteness of progress. Of late, a voice has come to us bidding us to take count not only of the scientific perfection of the chariot but of the depth of the ditches lying across its path.

When I was a child I had the freedom to make my own toys out of trifles and create my own games from imagination. In my happiness my playmates had their full share ; in fact the complete enjoyment of my games depended upon their taking part in them. One day, in this paradise of our childhood, entered a temptation from the market world of the adult. A toy bought from an English shop was given to one of our companions ; it was perfect, big and wonderfully life-like. He became proud of the toy and less mindful of the game ; he kept that expensive thing carefully away from us, glorying in his exclusive possession of it, feeling himself superior to his playmates whose toys were cheap. I am sure if he could have used the modern language of history he would have said that he was more civilised than ourselves to the extent of his owning that ridiculously perfect toy.

One thing he failed to realise in his excitement—a fact which at the moment seemed to him insignificant,—that this temptation obscured something a great deal more perfect than his toy, the revelation of the perfect child. The toy merely expressed his wealth, but not the child's creative spirit, not the child's generous joy in his play, his open invitation to all who were his compeers to his play-world.

Once there was an occasion for me to motor down to Calcutta from a place a hundred miles away. Something wrong with the mechanism made it necessary for us to have a repeated supply of water almost every half an hour. At the first village where we were compelled to stop, we asked the help of a man to find water for us. It proved quite a task for him, but when we offered him his reward, poor

though he was, he refused to accept it. In fifteen other villages the same thing happened. In a hot country where travellers constantly need water, and where the water supply grows scanty in summer, the villagers consider it their duty to offer water to those who need it. They could easily make a business of it, following the inexorable law of demand and supply. But the ideal which they consider to be their *dharma* has become one with their life. To ask them to sell it, is like asking them to sell their life. They do not claim any personal merit for possessing it.

Lao-tze speaking about the man who is truly good says : *He quickens, but owns not. He acts, but claims not. Merit he accomplishes, but dwells not on it. Since he does not dwell on it, it will never leave him.* That which is outside ourselves we can sell, but that which is one with our life we cannot. This complete assimilation of truth belongs to the paradise of perfection ; it lies beyond the purgatory of self-consciousness. To have reached it proves a long process of civilisation.

To be able to take a considerable amount of trouble in order to supply water to a passing stranger and yet never to claim merit or reward for it seems absurdly and negligibly simple compared with the capacity to produce an amazing number of things per minute. A millionaire tourist, ready to corner the food market and grow rich by driving the whole world to the brink of starvation, is sure to feel too superior to notice this simple thing while rushing through our villages at sixty miles an hour. For it is not aggressive like a telegraphic pole that pokes our attention with its hugely long finger, or resounding like his own motor engine that shouts its discourtesy to the silent music of the spheres.

Yes, it is simple ; but that simplicity is the product of centuries of culture ; such simplicity is difficult of imitation. In a few years' time it might be possible for me to learn how to make holes in thousands of needles instantaneously by turning a wheel, but to be absolutely simple in one's hospitality to one's

enemy or to a stranger requires generations of training. Simplicity takes no account of its own value, claims no wages, and therefore those who are enamoured of power do not realise that simplicity of spiritual expression is the highest product of civilisation.

A process of disintegration can kill this rare fruit of a higher life, as a whole race of birds possessing some rare beauty can be made extinct by the vulgar power of avarice which has civilised weapons. This fact was clearly proved to me when I found that the only place where a price was expected for the water given to us, was when we reached a suburb of Calcutta, where life was richer, the water supply easier and more abundant, and where progress flowed in numerous channels in all directions. We must get to know this force of disintegration, and how it works.

Creation is the revelation of truth through the rhythm of form, its dualism consisting of the expression and the material. Of these the material must offer itself as a sacrifice in absolute loyalty to the expression. It must know that it can be no end in itself and therefore by the pressure of its voluminousness it should not carry men away from their creative activities.

In India we have a species of Sanskrit poem in which all the complex grammatical rules are deliberately illustrated. This produces continual sparks of delight in the minds of some readers, who, even in a work of art, seek some tangible proof of power, almost physical in its manifestation. This shows that by special cultivation a kind of mentality can be produced which is capable of taking delight in the mere spectacle of power, manipulating materials, forgetting that materials have no value of their own. We see the same thing in the modern western world where progress is measured by the speed with which materials are multiplying. Their measure by horse-power is one before which spirit-power has made itself humble. Horse-power drives, spirit-power sustains. That which drives is called the

principle of progress, that which sustains we call *dharma* ; and this word *dharma* I believe should be translated as civilisation.

We have heard from the scientist that an atom consists of a nucleus drawing its companions round it in a rhythm of dance and thus forms a perfect unit. A civilisation remains healthy and strong as long as it contains in its centre some creative ideal that binds its members in a rhythm of relationship. It is a relationship which is beautiful and not merely utilitarian. When this creative ideal which is *dharma* gives place to some overmastering passion, then this civilisation bursts into conflagration like a star that has lighted its own funeral pyre. From its modest glow of light this civilisation flares up into a blaze, only to end in violent extinction.

Western society, for some ages, had for its central motive force a great spiritual ideal and not merely an impetus to progress. It had its religious faith which was actively busy in bringing about reconciliation among the conflicting forces of society. What it held to be of immense value was the perfection of human relationship, to be obtained by controlling the egoistic instincts of man, and by giving him a philosophy of his fundamental unity. In the course of the last two centuries, however, the West found access to Nature's storehouse of power, and ever since all its attention has been irresistibly drawn in that direction. Its inner ideal of civilisation has thus been pushed aside by the love of power.

Man's ideal has for its field of activity the whole of human nature from its depth to its height. The light of this ideal is gentle because diffused, its life is subdued because all-embracing. It is serene because it is great ; it is meek because it is comprehensive. But our passion is narrow ; its limited field gives it an intensity of impulse. Such an aggressive force of greed has of late possessed the western mind. This has happened within a very short period, and has created a sudden deluge of things

smothering all time and space over the earth. All that was human is being broken into fragments.

In trying to maintain some semblance of unity among such a chaos of fractions, organisations are established for manufacturing, in a wholesale quantity, peace, or piety, or social welfare. But such organisations can never have the character of a perfect unit. Surely they are needed as we need our drinking vessels, but more for the water than for themselves. They are mere burdens by themselves and if we take pleasure in multiplying them indefinitely the result may be astoundingly clever, but unfortunately fatal to life.

I have read somewhere an observation of Plato in which he says : "An intelligent and socialised community will continue to grow only as long as it can remain a unit ; beyond that point growth must cease, or the community will disintegrate and cease to be an organic being." That spirit of the unit is only maintained when its nucleus is some living sentiment of *dharmā*, leading to co-operation and to a common sharing of life's gifts.

Lao-tze has said ; *Not knowing the eternal causes passions to rise ; and that is evil.* Comforts and conveniences are pursued, things are multiplied, the eternal is obscured, the passions are roused, and the evil marches triumphant from continent to continent mutilating man. And we are asked to build triumphal arches for this march of death. Let us at least refuse to acknowledge its victory, even if we cannot retard its progress. Let us die, as your Lao-tze has said, and yet not perish.

It is said in our scriptures : *In greed is sin, in sin death.* The Chinese philosopher has said : *No greater calamity than greed.* These sentences carry the wisdom of ages. When greed becomes the dominant character of a people it forebodes destruction for them, and no mere organisation like the League of Nations can ever save them. To let the flood of self-seeking flow unchecked from the heart of the nation and at the same time try to build an outer dam across its path can never succeed. The deluge



will burst forth with a greater force because of the resistance. Lao-tze says : *Not self-seeking, he gaineth life.* Life's principle is in this and therefore in a society all the training and teachings that make for life are those that help us in our control of selfish greed.

When civilisation was living, that is to say, when most of its movements were related to an inner ideal and not to an external compulsion, then money had not the same value as it has now. Do you not realise what an immense difference that fact has made in our life, and how barbarously it has cheapened those things which are invaluable in our inheritance ? We have grown so used to this calamitous change that we do not fully realise the indignity it imposes upon us.

I ask you to imagine a day, if it does ever come, when in a meeting everybody will leave his chair and stand up in awe if a man enters who has a greater number of human skulls strung in his necklace than have his fellow beings. We can have no hesitation to-day in admitting that this would be pure barbarism. Are there no other tokens of a similar degradation for man,—are there no other forms of human skulls than those which the savages so proudly wear ?

In olden times the mere hoarding of millions was never considered as wealth unless it had some crown of glory with which to proclaim its ideal greatness. In the East as well as in the West, man, in order to save his inherent dignity, positively despised money which represented merely a right of possession and no moral responsibility. Money-making as a profession was everywhere contemptuously treated, and men, who made big profits the sole end of their life, were looked down upon.

There was a time in India when our Brahmins were held in reverence, not only for their learning and purity of life, but for their utter indifference to material wealth. This only shows that our society was fully conscious that its very life depended upon its ideals, which were never to be insulted by anything that belonged to a passion for self-seeking. But because to-day

progress is considered to be characteristic of civilisation, and because this progress goes on gathering an unending material extension, money has established its universal sovereignty. For in this world of ambition money is the central power-house sending impulsions in all directions.

In former days, the monarchs of men were not ashamed humbly to pay their respect to men of intellect or those who had spiritual or creative gifts. For the qualities of the higher life were the motive force of the civilisation of those times. But to-day men, whatever their position, never think that they are humiliating themselves when they offer their homage to men of corpulent cash, not always because they expect any benefit therefrom, but because of the bare fact of its possession. This denotes a defeat of the complete man by the material man. This huge degradation, like a slimy reptile, has spread its coils round the whole human world. Before we can rescue humanity from the bondage of its interminable tail, we must free our mind from the sacrilege of worship offered to this unholy power, this evil dragon which can never be the presiding deity of the civilisation of man.

The danger, however, is not so much from the enemy who attacks, but from the defender who may betray. It fills my heart with a great feeling of dismay when, among the present generation of young men, I see signs of their succumbing to a fascination for mere size and power. They go about seeking for civilisation amongst the wilderness of sky-scrapers, in the shrieking headlines of news-journals, and the shouting vociferation of demagogues. They leave their own great prophets who had a far-seeking vision of truth, and roam in the dusk begging for a loan of light from some glow-worm which can only hold its niggardly lantern for the purpose of crawling towards its nearest dust.

They will learn the meaning of the word civilisation, when they come back home and truly understand what that great master, Lao-tze, wanted to teach when he said : *Those who have*

*virtue attend to their obligations ; those who have no virtue attend to their claims.* In this saying he has expressed in a few words what I have tried to explain in this paper. Progress which is not related to an inner ideal, but to an attraction which is external, seeks to satisfy our endless claims. But civilisation, which is an ideal, gives us power and joy to fulfil our obligations.

About the stiffening of life and hardening of heart caused by the organisation of power and production, he says with profound truth :

*The grass as well as the trees, while they live, are tender, are supple ; when they die they are rigid and dry. Thus the hard and the strong are the companions of death. The tender and the delicate are the companions of life. Therefore he who in arms is strong will not conquer. The strong and the great stay below. The tender and the delicate stay above.*

Our sage in India says, as I have quoted before : *By the help of a-dharma men prosper, they find what they desire, they conquer enemies, but they perish at the root.* The wealth which is not welfare grows with a rapid vigour, but it carries within itself the seed of death. This wealth has been nourished in the West by the blood of men and the harvest is ripening. The same warning was also given centuries ago by your sage when he said : *Things thrive and then grow old. This is called Un-reason. Un-reason soon ceases.*

Your teacher has said : *To increase life is called a blessing.* For, the increase of life, unlike the increase of things, never transcends the limits of life's unity. The mountain pine grows tall and great, its every inch maintains the rhythm of an inner balance, and therefore even in its seeming extravagance it has the reticent grace of self-control. The tree and its productions belong to the same vital system of cadence ; the timber, leaves, flowers and fruits are one with the tree ; their exuberance is not a malady of exaggeration, but a blessing. But systems which mainly are for making profits and not for supplying life's needs, encourage an obesity of ugliness in our society, obliterating the

fine modulations of personality from its features. Not being one with our life, they do not conform to its rhythm.

Our living society, which should have dance in its steps, music in its voice, beauty in its limbs, which should have its metaphor in stars and flowers, maintaining its harmony with God's creation, becomes, under the tyranny of a prolific greed, like an overladen market-cart, jolting and creaking on the road that leads from things to the Nothing, tearing ugly ruts across the green life till it breaks down under the burden of its vulgarity on the wayside, reaching nowhere. For, this is called *Un-reason*, as your teacher has said, *and Un-reason soon ceases*.



## INDICTMENT\*

INTOXICATED with the wine of blood  
they spread devastation far and wide.  
Pity them, the inhuman machines :  
they are only the blind tools of Death.

But, there are those others  
—cruel by calculation—  
who tear the vitals of humanity  
in malicious frenzy :  
and, they are termed *men* !  
Alas for man, alas for his brazen tongue,  
when his words suffice not  
to utter the emphatic indictment  
of hate and horror  
of counterfeits that are called men.

I ask of the god of time yet again :  
When will the end come  
of the masked brute ?  
Will it come  
with the awful stillness,  
when the last things have crumbled down  
and the funeral fire has nought left to burn ?

Rabindranath Tagore

December 18,  
1940.  
Midnight.

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\* Translated from the original Bengali by Kshitish Roy.



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*By Rabindranath*



## HOW FAR DO I BELIEVE IN GANDHISM ?

Nirmal Kumar Bose

I HAVE tried to study Gandhiji's writings with reverence, and have also written essays on various aspects of his teaching. But in these essays, I have always tried to reduce myself to zero, and thus, I hope, I have been able to understand Gandhism better than if I should have been burdened with my personal ideas from the very beginning of the enquiry. But, I believe, the time has now come when I should try to find out how far there is agreement or difference between my own ideas and those of Gandhiji, as I have understood him.

### GANDHIJI'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Gandhiji believes that, in spite of seeming reverses, humanity is on the upward grade, and human history is really a story of unfoldment in terms of spirituality. Although he does not appear to have written so explicitly, yet he seems to believe that all this progress which we observe in course of evolution, is in accordance with God's own plan and has, moreover, a definite object in view, viz. the realization of the fact of human unity by all men on earth.

Now, this is a point where I find it hard to agree with him. And so also with many Socialists. Many of my Socialist friends seem to believe that there is an inevitable progressive urge in human history ; and this, they hold, is in conformity with the laws of biological evolution. Where Gandhiji speaks of God, they speak of Nature and of History.

This is where I find some difficulty in agreement. If we look at the sum-total of human history, we find there has been undoubtedly some amount of progress, though that has not substantially affected man's inborn capacities in the course of the last ten or twenty thousand years. A child of today is born



with the same fund of instincts as, say, a child of the Bronze or Iron Ages. But there has been a steady accumulation in man's civilizational or cultural equipment during all these centuries. This cultural environment, in which a child is nurtured from the moment it is born, modifies human behaviour to a very large extent. And as there has been cultural progress due to accumulation of experiences, human beings also seem to show a progressive trend in their behaviour as compared to men of earlier ages. But this progress is not inborn, nor is it such as to serve mankind in times of crisis. In moments of panic, men behave like animals and all the cultured behaviour of centuries vanishes from them in a moment.

I do not, therefore, see any reason to believe that there has been any real progress in man's instinctive equipment. Moreover, when there are doubts about the progress itself, and when much of the observed progress is due to the mere piling up of elements of civilization, I do not find any justification for the belief that there is any deterministic trend observable in human evolution.

In spite of these reservations, we do admit there has been some amount of change for the better in human behaviour when we take a long view of things. On closer analysis, we find that this has been due not only to the accumulation of cultural equipment, as we have already stated, but also to the fact that men have been born from time to time in the world with more love, more sympathy than was stamped upon them by their immediate environment. And these men, endowed with love for mankind, have utilized the cultural accumulation of centuries for the alleviation of human suffering. Selfish men have been known to use humanity's civilizational gains for selfish purposes. Much of the science of today is used to kill mankind, and that for serving small sectional interests. But men have also been born, now and then, with more love than was theoretically justified by the circumstances under which they were born. Marx was born with more sympathy and a larger vision of human unity than his immediate cultural environment justified. So was

Buddha. So is Gandhi today. This love may have been in them from the very beginning ; or it may have had small normal beginnings, and later on may have been increased beyond measure by later application or sadhana, as a Hindu philosopher would like to say.

It seems to me that this love has been more responsible for human progress than any other single factor that I know of. I do not know if the emergence of such men of love and of vision, who utilize man's conquests over nature, his accumulated experiences, for the total welfare of the human race, is governed by any greater law which usually escapes our analysis. I have never come across any experience to justify such a belief. And so long as it is so, I would prefer to believe that the observed amount of human progress has been more due to the operation of intelligent love and of will applied to outward circumstances than to any other known factor.

This brings the task of human re-organization within the ambit of our power. We would try to modify the exercise of will of large numbers of human beings in order to bring about a change in objective cultural circumstances. This is where I would come back to an agreement with Mahatma Gandhi and a departure from the views of many Socialists.

#### RELATIVE VALUE OF VARIOUS FACTORS

A Socialist would immediately say, "Yes, that is all right. But then your will can only be effective if the outward circumstances are favourable to that end." I would not hesitate to agree with him ; but I would look upon the proportionate strength of will and circumstance in a slightly different light from my Socialist friend. I value will more and circumstance less than my friend ; but this is merely a difference in quantity and not in quality.

But this difference in valuation leads us to different lines of action in bringing about social change. My friend would say, we should strictly follow along the lines described in broad

outline by Karl Marx, for there is no second line of action for humanity's emancipation ; whereas, I would say with Gandhiji, let us take care of the subjective thing, the objective circumstances will also inevitably change, but let us not make too much of them. In other words, whereas the Socialist would try to break men's present habits and create a new set of habits by first capturing the State and by placing the State under the dictatorship of the proletariat, I, as a follower of Gandhi, would say that that is not the *only* way to change humanity for the better. The forces of social evolution are varied enough to allow the operation of another method of revolution. And that is where we concentrate upon educating the will of mankind, being sure that the outward circumstances will change in correspondence with the inner change. Non-violent non-cooperation is that process by means of which we change the world and also educate the will from the very beginning of our activities. Our educative process begins, not after the State is won for dictatorship of the proletariat, but long before that.

#### SWARAJ

One thing which appeals to me very much in Gandhiji's writings, is his conception of Swaraj. In that Swaraj, every man is bound by the law of bread-labour. Only children and the sick and the aged would be exempt from it, and all the rest will have to labour by means of their body, enough to produce their daily bread or its equivalent, by application in some occupation like agriculture and weaving or their allied pursuits. Such men will form voluntary associations for the government of social, political and economic life. Of economic decentralization, I shall speak later on. But so far as social and political decentralization is concerned, I find myself in sympathy with Gandhiji's ideas, which appear to me to approach Kropotkin's ideal of Anarchist Communism in many respects.

Decentralization of power not only prevents the chances and the temptation of corruption at the centre, but, I suppose, it

has the additional merit of making more men responsible for the work and welfare of the world than complete centralization. The stimulation of individual initiative, I consider to be a good and desirable thing. It also appears good that the power of the State should be reduced to the utmost possible extent, of course, consistent with the preservation of efficiency. I also believe that, theoretically at least, this can be brought about by non-violent non-cooperation. If that also proves to be practically so, it would be undoubtedly an improvement on all the other methods which have been suggested towards the same end. Thus, both intellectually and emotionally, I would like to see Swaraj or self-rule brought into being by non-violent non-cooperation.

#### THE METHOD

But the question arises, in this world of economic centralization, is it possible to bring about economic decentralization ? Against this background of economic centralization, is it possible to do without corresponding political centralization ? It is quite right that political decentralization should go hand in hand with economic decentralization. That is why Gandhiji holds Khadi and Satyagraha to be two faces of the same coin. But is it possible to overcome the present centralization in the world by non-violent non-cooperation ? This is where I have neither any conviction of my own, nor where Gandhiji's faith in the basic non-violent nature of the masses finds a ready echo in my heart. To me, the masses are intrinsically neither violent nor non-violent. The Indian masses are steeped in stupor and ignorance ; and I concede it may be equally possible for them to be moved one way or the other.

Whether the method of non-violent non-cooperation will be effective on a mass scale or not, is not known at the present moment. It has been known to succeed admirably in the individual sphere, as violence never has. So I am prepared to wait, watch and even help, where I can, in its mass-operation. The art of non-violent warfare is unknown to many of us ;

we have not experience enough in it to take the initiative when Gandhiji is not there to help us. But I have no cynicism, and am prepared to follow his leadership like a soldier as long as the expert in non-violent technique is there to guide us. May be, such obedience and experience will ultimately bring faith in the method to us ; and in the end even give us the strength to take the initiative when more seasoned soldiers have been taken away from our midst.

But one thing I do know. And that is, that it is faith of the kind that Gandhiji has, which has brought victory of the will over circumstances, and thus been responsible for progress in human affairs in the past. Knowing this, and having an inner sympathy with this love and this faith and an intellectual—though not sentimental—aversion against violence, I would do all I can to foster the cause for which Gandhiji is fighting.

I know this is not “living faith” in the technique of non-violent non-cooperation *on a mass scale* ; but this is where I stand.

#### ECONOMIC DECENTRALIZATION

It may be true that if we eschew the present methods of production and bring about decentralization in the productive sphere it will lower man's actual or potential standard of living to a certain extent. More human labour may then be required than if the world were completely socialized and scientific production brought absolutely under communal control, and in the interest of humanity taken as a whole.

Here my sympathies are with Socialists ; but I would say, that the above case has not yet been wholly proved. If it is absolutely necessary to have centralization in the productive sphere for the sake of unadulterated human welfare, then let us have it by all means. But let us have as little as possible of centralization in the political sphere. For that is an evil. Even if it be proved that political centralization is absolutely necessary for human progress, I would

suggest that certain men, who think differently, ought to be given the liberty to think and act even contrary to the State's wishes, provided they remain non-violent and also forfeit the advantages which accrue to them from social life. These men must be released from the operation of the State's laws under these conditions ; and thus, human liberty purchased by the surrender of earthly goods, will lead mankind farther along the line of progress than drilling along a particular line of habits ever can, however estimable the latter may be.

But that apart, I am firmly of opinion with respect to Gandhiji that if economic centralization is proved to be absolutely necessary for human welfare, we shall surely find him voting on our side. His emphasis upon khadi and its corollary activities is, to me, a symbol of his insistence upon the need of valuing the human question above all others in economic considerations. In the flush of Science's victory over Nature, we have often been led astray and forgotten Man. And in that dark moment of our intellect, we have allowed greed and selfishness to rule our hearts. Science has been made to serve profit not humanity ; and it is against this constitution of things that Gandhiji is fighting with all his might. Here I am prepared to go the whole way with him.

#### SWARAJ AND THE STATE

In Gandhiji's ideal conception, the State is not there, its place being taken by voluntary associations formed for the sake of social government. But today, in India, we have to fight against one highly centralized power ; and a certain amount of centralization seems inevitable in the organization which is going to replace it. That is why we find Gandhiji fighting for Indian independence and voting for the Congress government when it was in power.

In that State which we shall build up, what shall be the position of Capital and of Labour ? Shall the State subordinate both in the interest of something called the Nation, or shall the interests of Labour alone be its prime concern ?

Gandhiji's utterances on this subject are not all uniform. In his *Indian Home Rule* (1908), he laid down, as his fundamental principle, that it is Swaraj only when the peasantry, i. e. the actual producer, felt that he had now gained the power to direct his own destiny, either by himself or through his freely chosen representatives, the ultimate power always residing with him. Gandhiji has also written to the effect that only when the means of production are jointly held by the commune and used solely for human welfare, will he be satisfied about the economic welfare of the world.

He has also written that some amount of inequality may be inevitable even though equality is the desired goal. He is prepared for a certain amount of difference in wages, if by that alone men can be stimulated to put forth their best in the service of mankind. These are things where we can wholly agree with him. But, as against this, he has also written that if the zemindars behave properly towards their tenants, and do not override the "legitimate" interests of the peasantry, he will allow the zemindary system to remain.

I have carefully gone through the several statements of Gandhiji where he has expressed this sentiment. And I have come to the conclusion that this is not what he considers desirable. It is an opinion on the basis of existing transitory facts ; his permanent ideal being that, in the end, all men should be turned labourers and there would be no rich, no poor, no exploiter and no exploited. Unfortunately he once said that the rich and poor will perhaps remain till the end of time ; but fortunately, he has never expressed the opinion that this is a desirable goal. It was evidently in conformity with his other statement, viz. "My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realised. I therefore work for equitable distribution" (*Young India*, 17. 3. 37).

However, we would have been much more happy if he had said nothing of the kind to zemindars. We can understand his faith in human nature, his emphasis upon the voluntary

method of liquidation of proprietorship. But personally I hold that this, combined with his previous half-assurance to zemindars that they can retain their position of moral leadership if they surrender economic advantages completely and become trustees, is a doctrine under which selfish men may easily take shelter without becoming trustees in the sense in which Gandhiji wishes them to be.

If, instead of this, he only teaches the toiling millions of what wrong has been done to them in the past, how they have suffered through their own weakness as well as through the greed and violence of others ; if he trains and guides them in such a manner that they gain the power of dictating what is "legitimate" and what "illegitimate", if all this power comes to the masses through non-violent non-cooperation, then none would be happier than myself. I would appreciate Gandhiji's abundant love even for the exploiters of today. I would appreciate his desire to convert even them to the path of no-exploitation. But I would wish him to tell the zemindars straightaway that, in the end, no exploitation will be countenanced in a free world. He can request them to be trustees, but if they do not become trustees, he should tell them, the State or the smaller Communes will ultimately have to confiscate their property in the interest of the toiling millions.

True, this is also Mahatma Gandhi's own opinion. In an interview given in 1934\* as well as at the Round Table Conference in London in 1932, he expressed himself to be almost wholly of this very same opinion. In his conception of the State in a free India, all interests are to be subjected to scrutiny and revised in conformity with the interests of the toiling millions. If any of these interests is not capable of revision, it must subside.

Thus although Gandhiji places a very high value on the

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\* *Studies in Gandhism*, by Nirmal Kumar Bose. D. M. Library, Calcutta 1940, pp. 40-46.



voluntary method, yet, in case it does not bring about the desired result, he would permit the State to use the minimum of violence in order to turn things into the service of the masses alone. This is where we feel happy, and find justification for the occasional statement of Gandhiji that he is also a Socialist in his belief, but of a different kind.

#### THE NATION AND HUMANITY

What then about Nationalism? Some of my friends have compared Gandhiji's views with regard to the relation between Capital and Labour with that of the Fascists where they try to form a compromise between the two in the larger interests of the Nation. My friends believe that Gandhism will readily lead the Fascist way and not the Socialist one.

But here I shall join issue with them. It is true that Gandhiji has, in the present state of our national evolution, tried to harness both the peasantry as well as the capitalist class to the national cause; and it is also true that some capitalists have profited by their association with him. But there are two points where he departs very widely from Fascism. One is that in the State of his conception, the interests of the toiling millions will occupy the supreme position. This is a point which we have already discussed. The other is that he never dreams of benefiting the Indian nation at the expense of any other nation. Not only so. His idea is that if India possesses anything which other people in the world do not possess but need, then it is the duty of India to place it voluntarily at the service of humanity without any thought of profit whatsoever. Gandhiji always thinks in terms of humanity taken as a whole, and never cut up into water-tight compartments marked off from one another by racial, religious or linguistic barriers. It is in this respect that he departs widest from Fascism. If India has ever been the chosen land for him, it has always been his dream that the land should lead the world in the art of self-sacrifice and not in anything else. Obviously such a nation, if we can call it a nation, will not

exploit other nations, but will serve to enrich the life of humanity.

It is true that many of those who follow Mahatma Gandhi are not humanists but nationalists in their personal sympathies. They have turned Gandhiji, or wish to turn him, into a symbol of nationalism ; and in their hands, Gandhism may readily degenerate into a form of Fascism when he is no longer with us.

But as long as he is living, there is no doubt that he will never allow the Indian nation to prosper at the expense of any other nation. He has always maintained that the path of Truth is narrow as the sword's edge ; in other words, if we do not keep the light of Truth burning clearly within us, there is every danger of our taking a wrong course in our life. And here he wants us to keep the interests of toiling humanity above everything else in our political considerations.

We shall therefore close with a few quotations from Mahatma Gandhi, showing how, for the last twenty years, he has been above the spirit of narrow nationalism, and how his ideal has always been to serve, not India's, but humanity's cause, through the achievement of India's independence by non-violent non-cooperation.

"My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself" ( *Young India*, 11. 8. 20 ).

"Isolated independence is not the goal of the world-states. It is voluntary interdependence" ( *Young India*, 17. 7. 24. ).

"There is no limit to extending our service to our neighbours across State-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers" ( *Young India*, 31. 12. 31 ).

"We want freedom for our country, but not at the expense

or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other countries. For my own part I do not want the freedom of India if it means the extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilised for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love therefore of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human races may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism" ( *Gandhiji in Indian Villages*, 1927, page 170 ).

## MEMORIES\*

Sreemati Krishna Hutheesing

“MEMORIES are like roses in December,” said a poet. They are when they bring with them the fragrance of beautiful flowers to a lonely soul, but not all memories are beautiful. Some are tinged with sadness, some with regret and others bring an ache which neither time nor environment can change or lessen. One has memories of pleasant days, days of sunshine and laughter. Memories of sad days when the sun seemed to be overshadowed by dark clouds and life seemed empty and useless. Yet they all pass, because they must—some leaving few traces behind, others that are unforgettable.

And so memories assail me each time I return to the home of my childhood, happy memories of a marvellous childhood, and sad memories of later years—of days gone by which one cannot re-live again. Memories that sadden the heart till it is near breaking point, for the old home is no longer what it was, and each time I return to it some new change has taken place.

I sat in the old familiar garden, the only unchanged spot in a world that is ever changing. Before me stood the stately house that was my home, and as I gazed at it with unseeing eyes, with my thoughts far away, the book I had intended to read lay on my lap neglected. At my feet and round about lovely butterflies flitted. The fresh smell of the grass was good and the scent of roses was wafted along on the breeze towards me. I lay back with a sigh, for though all around me everything looked so beautiful and so peaceful, in my heart there was a dull ache for something beyond my grasp—something that I had lost and could not find again. And so with my thoughts wandering unconnectedly I dozed off, to dream of days that had been but were just a memory now.

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\* The author is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's sister.—Ed.

I saw a house full of people—a large, rambling, old house, full of every luxury that taste and money could provide. Its master, a fine looking man with a tremendous personality seemed to fill the whole house with his presence, his laughter and the love with which he surrounded his family. He seemed to be a tower of strength that stood between those he loved and all harm. The lady of the house, beautiful beyond all description, a fragile, gracious little creature flitted about looking after her family with an energy one would hardly believe possible in one so frail. Everywhere there was life and activity—happiness and contentment, and in such an atmosphere three children grew up.

Some years later. The house was the same but all signs of pomp and splendour had gone. Simplicity had taken the place of the lavish grandeur of a few years before. But the inmates were the same, and the hearty laughter of the master still rang throughout the house and cheered all those who might be feeling downhearted. For the change had come, not through any misfortune, but because of a changed outlook and political convictions.

A few more years passed. It was another house built next to the old one. A house like a dream which a loving father built for a beloved son but which brought little happiness to its inmates and much sorrow.

In one of the spacious rooms sat an old man with snow-white hair, his head bent in thought. He was very ill, and had travelled hundreds of miles to arrive home before his son was taken away to prison for certain political views that he held. The old man too had passed many months in a prison cell for the same ideas and he was ready to go again. He had arrived in time, but just in time to clasp his son by the hand before he was taken away. Near him sat the little woman who had so bravely shared his life and all its triumphs and sorrows. She

looked more fragile than ever, yet strangely enough it was she who gave him the courage to bear up under each new blow, she who had been so timid and frail, whilst he had always been so fearless and strong.

In one corner of the room sat the elder daughter of the house. She was married and had children and realised fully how much anguish her parents must be feeling. Her eyes were glued to their faces anxiously and her heart was torn with pain to watch their silent suffering and not to be able to help. In another part of the room, leaning up against the wall with her head turned away from the others, stood the younger daughter. In her heart there was an ache also, in her eyes were unshed tears, and her mind was seething with rebellious thoughts. The others seemed to be resigned to whatever the fates might have in store for them—but not she. Sometimes she felt that all that suffering was necessary for a cause as great as theirs. At other times doubts and misgivings flooded her mind when she saw her parents, burdened with anxiety and loneliness. They could have owned the world and lived a life of comfort, free from all cares and worries—yet they chose the difficult path of duty and devoted their lives to serve humanity and their country. Tortured with conflicting thoughts she stood, not daring to look at the parents whose suffering she could not help to lessen. The house was strangely silent without the loved son, yet even the old house seemed to stand more erectly as though immensely proud of the son it had sheltered within its walls ! The parents sat regardless of time, each longing for the son who was only a few miles away in a cold prison cell, while they sat in their palatial home, hating the comforts surrounding them !

Just for a short while they sat, each engrossed in his or her own thoughts and these thoughts revolving round the same person. For a while only,—then suppressing a sigh the father rose, his firm chin set in grim determination. He must be up and about and carry on the work his son had been prevented from doing, and so squaring his broad shoulders he walked away.

And the little woman, mother of a great son, she too got up with a brave smile and an aching heart, to carry on the day's work just as before.

The years passed. A huge crowd of thousands upon thousands of human beings lined the route for miles. Not an eye was dry, not a heart that did not ache as if it had lost something of its very own. They were there to pay homage to the great dead, for the master was no longer in their midst. Always a fighter, he even fought death for many days and nights, to be able to live a few more years to see the result of his life's work. But death triumphed, as it always does in the end, and he passed away. In a room of that once joyous house sat the widow of him who had gone on his last journey, unable even to shed tears, for the shock of separation was great. Near her, with his arms around her sat her son, his eyes full of tears, for he had loved his father deeply. He knew not how to comfort his mother, but it was she who comforted him, her strong young son, with a soft clasp of the hand.

Time marched on. The old house had seen many changes, and it had still to see many more. Cars stood along the drive and policemen were dotted all over the compound. All these preparations were for the arrest of the two daughters. They had not sat idle all these years but had worked and followed in their father's footsteps, and upheld the tradition of their family. And for this they too had to go to prison as their father and brother before. Courteously the officers produced the warrant, smilingly the girls received it, and turned to go inside to collect a few belongings. Just then the little mother came, as fast as her weak limbs could carry her. "What is all this about?" she asked—"why so many cars and people?" Gently the elder daughter put her arm round the mother and told her. For a moment she weakened and tears filled her eyes as she clasped her two daughters and whispered, "I shall be so lonely without you." But

it was only for a moment. She straightened her tiny figure and faced this new ordeal with all the courage of a baffled lioness. "I am proud of you," she said, "very proud." "And I am not too old to follow suit," she added with a twinkle in her eye. She clasped her daughters once again and put out her hands to give them her blessings. But that delicate wisp of a body had undergone too much suffering and anguish, and could bear no more. As she raised her hands she fainted away. The girls were driven away in a car to their destination. . . . And life went on as usual.

A prison cell with dark grim walls, within which sat two sisters—drawn closer together now than ever before, with a common bond. They sat leaning against each other, looking through the iron bars at a beautiful red sky which meant a glorious sunset somewhere, beyond those prison walls. Wrapped up in thoughts they sat, one longing for her own home, her husband and the little children she had left behind; the other longing to hear that infectious laughter of her father's that never failed to give courage and hope, and to feel the beloved mother's arms around her—the mother who was left alone in a big dreary house.

There was a rattling of chains and clanging of doors. What was it all about, the prisoners wondered. A wardress came towards the sisters—a telegram in her hands. Fearfully they took it, then after a second they smiled at each other. So she had kept her word, their brave little mother, and she too was behind prison bars in some distant prison. How very courageous of her, and how ruthless of them that took her—an old woman of sixty-five!

A few more years had passed. Large crowds had gathered again in the house that had seen so much of joy and sorrow. It was the little mother who had sighed one evening and given up her life, quietly without a word. She had always lived for others—she died without troubling anyone. And there she lay



on her bed, lovely and so life-like, decked with flowers like a queen, for she was one to the very end.

I saw a lonely house stripped of all its laughter and joy standing in the midst of a garden that was no longer cared for. Inside, in one of the rooms sat the son, working, ever working at his table. He had not had an easy life, nor would he have much comfort or leisure in the future, for he had chosen for himself the straight and narrow path, and there was no turning back. Now and then when he raised his tired eyes, one could see a look of indescribable sadness therein, for he was a very lonely man. But he hid his great loneliness if others were present and with his smile and never failing charm of manner he won his way into all hearts.

Uneasily I shifted in my sleep, with my heart as heavy as lead. The years had brought many changes to this home I loved so much, but it was good to know that the brother I had come to see was still out of prison, for home was never quite the same without him. I opened my eyes with a longing to run upstairs to his room and talk to him. I picked up my book and almost ran towards the house. As I entered, the telephone rang. I picked it up and a strange voice said, "This is just to inform you that your brother's trial will be held to-morrow." "The trial to-morrow? What trial?" I wondered. I could not adjust my sleepy brain to the news. Then like a flash it all came back. There was no brother upstairs, waiting for me—I had been dreaming, for he had been arrested two days before.

Wearily I went up to my room, and instead of having a brother as a companion, I had only memories—bitter-sweet memories of days gone by.



LANDSCAPE

By Benode Behari Mukherjee,  
Santiniketan.



## DOSTOEVSKY : A REVALUATION

Dr. A. Aronson

IN view of the tendency of modern novelists towards introspection and self-analysis, a revaluation of Dostoevsky's art seems to be called for. Literary critics have long ago established his various artistic contexts. According to them he belongs to that group of 19th-century writers whose main concern was to show the human soul in the process of disintegration ; he is put side by side with Marcel Proust, Oscar Wilde, and other more contemporary authors, whose "ideal hero" seems to have been "the superfluous man", the commonplace individual in a neurotic condition, or the man-in-the-street turning criminal or saint. The purely literary approach to Dostoevsky will, however, fail to explain his remarkable influence on the modern novel. His novels are not character-studies or descriptions of social customs and manners or an analysis of the different neuroses in the human mind : they all deal with the search for certainty in its various forms and human situations. Despite all their objectivity and realism they are so essentially personal that no literary classification can possibly do them justice. Zola and Dickens, his most eminent literary contemporaries, were artists of a much more limited and inhibited kind ; they were indeed children of their century, stout believers in certain "ideals" and firmly rooted in the cultural soil that produced them. Dostoevsky was one of those who seem to have lost their contemporaries together with their ideals, one whose works stand out beyond the petty ideologies of a self-satisfied century. His creations are therefore of a universal appeal transgressing time and the conventions of art, just as Shakespeare and Balzac, whenever the essence of their work is concerned, are beyond all possible classifications.

From the very beginning we have to realize that Dostoevsky's "Soul" is not limited to Russia alone. To the

unprejudiced reader there should be nothing foreign in the description of the various psychological states of his characters, in the same way in which Shakespeare's *Hamlet* appeals to people far beyond the frontiers of England. Virginia Woolf, in her book *The Common Reader*, seems to resent the very existence of this "Soul"; she suspects it of a violent aggressiveness, and of an utter lack of restraint and refinement; she would like to classify the soul into a lower, a middle and an upper class: let people in novels behave according to their upbringing, their class, not their "soul":

"The 'soul' is alien to the English reader. It has little sense of humour and no sense of comedy. It is formless. It has slight connection with the intellect. It is confused, diffuse, tumultuous, incapable, it seems, of submitting to the control of logic or the discipline of poetry."<sup>1</sup>

A writer whose aim it is to depict the mental conditions of people who very frequently are far from being ordinary, is quite naturally bound to neglect the social environment within which his heroes live. Dostoevsky's characters are classless in more than one sense. They seem to stand outside their society. For the first time in the history of modern literature we find introspection and self-analysis as the main subject-matter of a novel. In Balzac the hero reaches fulfilment of his desires and aspirations only when he dominates over society; in Dickens, when he adjusts himself to the existing order and standards of a self-contented middle-class. The community towards which Dostoevsky's heroes tend can no longer be socially determined in any way: they all seem to be carried away by the ever-growing awareness that beyond a mere class-consciousness, there is an all-embracing unity in which all distinctions will be abolished.

It would however be wrong to think that Dostoevsky's novels are symbolical representations of certain psychological processes beyond all limits of time and space. He was intensely aware of the evils of his society. Most of his characters, in fact,

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1. Virginia Woolf : *The Common Reader*, "The Russian point of view", p. 225.

only behave<sup>1</sup> in an eccentric and abnormal way, because they are living in a society in transition, in which all social values had to be reshaped and in which the disintegration of social life had reached its climax. Prince Muishkin speaking of the past, formulates this change of social standards in his own peculiar way :

"At that time people seemed to stick so to one idea ; now, they are more nervous, more sensitive, more enlightened—people of two or three ideas at once—as it were. The man of to-day is a broader man, so to speak—and I declare, I believe that is what prevents him from being so self-contained and independent a being as his brother of those earlier days."<sup>1</sup>

Dostoevsky has given surprisingly few actual descriptions of the society of his time. It hardly ever even serves him as a background. Social criticism, as it is to be found in Tolstoy, has no place in his novels. If it exists at all it is used as a criticism of human beings rather than of social values. One of those rare passages is to be found in *The Idiot* :

"It never struck him ( Prince Muishkin ) that all this refined simplicity and nobility and wit and personal dignity might possibly be no more than an exquisite artistic polish. The majority of the guests—who were somewhat empty-headed, after all, in spite of their aristocratic bearing—never guessed, in their self-satisfied composure, that much of their superiority were mere veneer which indeed they had adopted unconsciously and by inheritance."<sup>2</sup>

Dostoevsky's characters, therefore, have to provide themselves with their own system of values. Living as they do in a society which has lost its belief in everything, they have to build up a self-contained conception of the universe which quite naturally was often opposed to the existing scheme of things. Most of his characters only "act" in order to live up to their own peculiar ideology. Raskolnikov is killing a "principle," not a real old woman. Only by committing his crime can he justify

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1. *The Idiot* : p. 510. ( All the following quotations are from the Everyman Edition of Dostoevsky's Works. )

2. *Ibid.* : p. 521.

his own existence. The real conflict arises in Dostoevsky, whenever the hero with his ideal view on life clashes with the society in transition. To give expression to this clash when it reaches its climax was Dostoevsky's aim. If we follow one of Dostoevsky's characters from beginning to end, we shall find, first, the origin of the abstract principle in the mind of the hero, then the realization of his "Idea", and lastly the purification of his soul, the return towards a pre-established unity as represented by the Gospels in *Crime and Punishment*. Raskolnikov, Prince Muishkin, and Dimitri Karamazov are only different aspects of the same process.

Dostoevsky's main characters are solitary people with an overstrained consciousness ; people who all of a sudden wake up one morning in order to realize that there is something wrong with the world and that only they can improve this state of affairs. There is something almost terrifying in this realization : they are standing outside their society and there is no way back : " 'I am alone and they are every one,' I thought and pondered."<sup>1</sup> They go on cultivating their own bitterness until a fixed idea takes hold of them ; to put this idea into practice, to live up to it, will be all their ambition for the rest of their life. Very frequently this idea reflects the disintegration around them combined with a violent disgust at everything that is commonplace and average. Sometimes even their "idea" consists in nothing but this very disgust against those who have no ideas of their own. Hippolyte in *The Idiot* is such a character :

"I hate you, Gavril Ardalionivitch, solely . . . because you are the type, and incarnation, and head, and crown of the most impudent, the most self-satisfied, the most vulgar and detestable form of commonplaceness. You are ordinary of the ordinary ; you have no chance of ever fathering the pettiest idea of your own."<sup>2</sup>

What does it matter if their idea is of a negative kind only ? Whether it is simply hate or disgust, or the realization

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1. *Notes from the Underground*.

2. *The Idiot*, p. 446.

that either crime or suicide are necessary, they will not hesitate to put it into practice. They will do it in order to prove to themselves that their idea was the right one and that they are endowed with sufficient will-power to act according to it. So it comes about that more than one character in Dostoevsky either commits suicide or wants to do so, merely in order to justify his very existence :

" 'I am bound to shoot myself because the highest point of my self-will is to kill myself with my own hands.'

'But you won't be the only one to kill yourself ; there are lots of suicides.'

'With good cause. But to do it without any cause at all, simply for self-will, I am the only one.' "1

Ultimately the abstract "idea" becomes a very concrete experience indeed, while the time between the origin of the idea and the deed itself is filled with introspection and self-analysis. This evolution from thinking in abstract terms to realization is the most significant thing in Dostoevsky's "super-soul."

Only after this "super-soul" has liberated itself from the "underworld", does it become truly independent and at the same time utterly isolated. That is why most of his heroes are aristocrats in mind : this implies both enormous will-power and eccentricity, intellectual awareness and the propensity for deep suffering. Raskolnikov, Dimitri Karamazov, and Rogojin are such characters. They are passionate in the extreme, either in their emotions or in their intellectual aspirations. They have lost their beliefs without being able to replace them by something better. They are like wrestlers in a vacuum, always conscious, however, of their own superiority :

"Rogojin was not merely a passionate soul ; he was a fighter. He was fighting for the restoration of his dying faith. He must have something to hold on to and believe, and someone to believe in."2

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1. *The Possessed*, II, p. 254.

2. *The Idiot*, p. 220.



The more aristocratic they are, the more will they feel tempted to mix with the common people ; not because of some brotherly feelings, but because of the natural attraction which exists between the two extreme poles of human existence : "Nobody would slap you on the shoulder. You are an awful aristocrat. An aristocrat is irresistible when he goes in for democracy !"<sup>1</sup> In their social relationships they are contemptuous, cruel and essentially unapproachable ; they behave in a way that would please Nietzsche's "super-men." Intellectually they sometimes realize the need for social relationships ; but they will never consent "to go in for democracy", unless it pleases their whims and moods of the moment. They are as far removed from democratic attitudes as from Christian Ethics. In Nietzsche we read :

"Do I counsel you to love your neighbour ? I rather counsel you to flee from your neighbour and to love that which is farthest. Higher than love for one's neighbour is love for the remote and for the future."<sup>2</sup>

And what does Ivan Karamazov say ?

"For any one to love a man, he must be hidden ; for as soon as he shows his face, love is gone. . . . To my thinking, Christ-like love for men is miracle impossible on earth. . . . One can love one's neighbour in the abstract, or even at a distance, but at close quarters it's almost impossible."<sup>3</sup>

Those who are proud in mind are incapable of action ; Raskolnikov is perhaps the only one of Dostoevsky's heroes who combines both action and thought. Ivan Karamazov and Stavrogin in *The Possessed* have their own shadows who will execute the deed according to their masters' well laid-out plan. These Smerdiakovs and Piotr Stepanovitchs represent the common-place and average ; they are puppets in the hands of a diabolical intellect. The man of action in all Dostoevsky's later novels has no "character", no will-power of his own, no "idea". He leads a truly "underworld" existence and emerges out of his

1. *The Possessed*, II, p. 70.

2. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 52.

3. *The Brothers Karamazov*, I, 281-2.

obscurity only to commit the deed ; they seem to act under the impulse and influence of an evil power and the way in which they usually confess their guilt shows their utter callousness and indifference. Had Dostoevsky attempted to write a second *Hamlet*, he would surely have made Horatio another Smerdiakov.

There is one notable exception among those of Dostoevsky's characters who are "proud in mind", who think and do not act ; that is Prince Muishkin. We can take it for granted that Dostoevsky wanted to show in him another aspect of the "super-soul", not the wild and destructive sensualism of Dimitri Karamazov, nor the diabolical intellect of his brother Ivan, nor the nihilism of Stavrogin or the Napoleonic principle of Raskolnikov, but rather the very opposite extreme, a kind of Christ-like meekness and goodness, a humility and deep love for all that is weak and suffering. *The Idiot* is undoubtedly Dostoevsky's most successful novel because it is the only one in which he attempted to establish a relationship between the two extreme poles of human existence, the savage sensualist and the humble saint, pride and humility. And yet Muishkin is a far from "virtuous" person ; as in the case of Rogojin, common standards of morals cannot be applied to him. But we cannot help feeling that Prince Muishkin is perhaps the only person in the novel who has any common-sense left at all ; this common-sense originates in a humility which once makes him say—when asked by another character what would be the most "virtuous" way of dying—"You should pass us by and forgive us our happiness."<sup>1</sup>

Who is this Prince Muishkin ? Did Dostoevsky really mean—as some may think—to represent in this novel an episode from the life of a modern Christ and the temptations to which a saint—should he ever arise—would be exposed in a modern society ; did he intend to add to his collection of abnormal characters one more, an epileptic "idiot" who tries to make himself understood to everybody and who is bound to fail ;

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1. *The Idiot*, p. 510.

or was it his intention to show us the fate of a man 'whose mind is still whole and not broken to pieces, a man with "one idea" and not with two or three all at once, in a disintegrating society? What does Prince Muishkin do? Indeed, he forgives us our happiness and he forgives us our suffering. He is childlike, innocent, and terribly aware of everything around him. He is more than ever like Hamlet. During the three years in Switzerland, as a patient in an asylum, he tried to "understand why men should be for ever tormenting themselves". But when he came back he found that all his "understanding" did not help him much : almost at once he was thrown into the whirlwind of the most disconcerting happenings, out of which there was only one way : back to the asylum. And Muishkin goes this way after the unavoidable deed had been committed.

His doctor in Switzerland has formulated his character in a few words :

"You have the form and face of an adult, but as regards soul, and character, and perhaps even intelligence, you are a child in the completest sense of the word, and always will be, if you live to be sixty."<sup>1</sup>

And Dostoevsky himself later on helps us with one of his own descriptions :

"A special characteristic of his was the naive candour with which he always listened to arguments which interested him, and with which he answered any question put to him on the subject at issue. In the very expression of his face that naivety was unmistakably evident, this disbelief in the insincerity of others, and unsuspecting disregard of irony or humour in their words."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the best definition of Muishkin's character would be to say that he had no pride. Self-consciousness and a feeling of superiority were unknown to him. Sometimes he even humiliated himself without any reason whatsoever. The suffering he saw around him was perhaps too great for him to bear :

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1 *The Idiot*, p. 70.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 820.

the only solution was to humiliate himself, in the same way as Father Zossima, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, kneels down before the very incarnation of "sinfulness" and pride, Dimitri. Pride and its consequence, humiliation, on the one hand, and humility on the other, these are the most significant psychological forces with which Dostoevsky deals in almost every one of his novels.

In Dostoevsky pride is very frequently shown on the borderline of a neurotic self-consciousness. Those who are intellectually, morally, or physically "proud" are bound to feel the same pride even in their own humiliation. Humiliation often becomes a stimulus to their pride. They are thrown about between these two extremes, hurting others and being hurt by others for no apparent reason. The "reason" no doubt lies within themselves : they cannot adjust themselves to the existing order of things, their responses and attitudes are always distorted by their "idea," are somehow imposed upon them from outside :

"I had been humiliated, so I wanted to humiliate . . . I had been treated like a rag, so I wanted to show my power."<sup>1</sup>

But even while torturing others, the feeling of one's own humiliation remains all the same. Nothing is more humiliating to oneself than to inflict pain on one's fellow-beings. To be conscious of this self-humiliation and to find a constant source of pleasure in it, is indeed the misfortune of many of Dostoevsky's characters :

"Come, can a man who attempts to find enjoyment in the very feeling of his own degradation possibly have a spark of respect for himself ?"<sup>2</sup>

In the same way in which pride and humiliation are no longer distinguishable in Dostoevsky, love and hate also are both struggling with each other within the hero's "soul." Even should love win for the time being, it will be a victory that will cost the hero dear : he will lose all sense of proportion and will

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1. *Notes from the Underground.*

2. *Ibid.*

do things for which he can no longer be held responsible. There is something pathetic in the way in which the characters debate within themselves whether it is love or hate or perhaps both that they feel for the object of their desires :

"Even in my underground dreams I did not imagine love except as a struggle. I began it always with hatred and ended it with moral subjugation, and afterwards I never knew what to do with the subjugated object."<sup>1</sup>

Dostoevsky is always at his best when he opposes in one novel two characters in whom two antagonistic psychological forces are represented. In *The Idiot* Rogojin is the sensual, the wild and unrestrained lover, whereas Prince Muishkin loves "philosophically" : for him as for the other two "saintly" characters in Dostoevsky, Father Zossima and Aljosha Karamazov, love is an intense feeling of sympathy or "actual suffering" for the beloved person. The clash between these two extreme attitudes provides the novel with a dramatic pathos and intensity, we can almost say, with a new dimension in literature :

"( Prince Muishkin : ) 'I told you before that I did not love her with love but with pity . . .'

( Rogojin : ) 'You say you love her with pity. I have no pity for her. She hates me—that's the plain truth of the matter. I dream of her every night, and always that she is laughing at me with another man. And so she does laugh at me.' "<sup>2</sup>

Are there no moments of joy in Dostoevsky ? Moments in which the characters are no longer conscious of their own consciousness, in which time that chains them down to this earth would be no more, and both the body and the soul would be forgotten ? Yes, there are. These moments usually last five seconds and precede an attack of epilepsy from which an astonishing number of Dostoevsky's characters seem to suffer—as he did himself. In these five seconds all the joy which they

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1. *Notes from the Underground*.

2. *The Idiot*, p. 198.

have been missing for such a long time, seems to be concentrated in an almost unbearable way. The characters who experience such a joy are usually tender-hearted mystics, dreamers and misunderstood prophets, moral reformers who have passed through all the negations of life, great and solitary sufferers : Kirillov and Shatov in *The Possessed*, Prince Muishkin in *The Idiot*, and perhaps Aljoshka Karamazov. These are the characters that wonder at the beauty of a tiny green leaf in spring, at the sun shining at dawn across a lake, and at the smiling face of a child on the street. They escape to the innocence of children whenever the company of adults becomes unbearable. They speak in allegories and symbols, because they are no longer conscious of their own disease. They provide us with the few lyrical passages in Dostoevsky's work. But after this intensity of happiness they collapse in an epileptic fit. They have lived "without time": and that means beyond all standards and values of conscious life :

"In those five seconds I live through a lifetime, and I'd give my whole life for them, because they are worth it. To endure ten seconds one must be physically changed."<sup>1</sup>

"I feel then as if I understood those amazing words 'There shall be no more time.' "<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the very personal "idea" of the character, there is also a more objective and philosophical "thesis" connected with almost everyone of his novels. The philosophy of Dostoevsky centres around God, and the search for God. A strange and not always intelligible synthesis takes place between religion on the one hand and Russia on the other. This implies a revolt against all forms of liberalism, the mechanical and purely legal attitude to life that then predominated throughout Europe, against Roman-catholicism and the Pope ; it also implies a tendency towards Pan-slavism, an insistence on the true values of philanthropy and "brotherhood" and the Gospels. Perhaps the

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1. *The Possessed*, II, p. 228.

2. *The Idiot*, p. 216.

least convincing part of Dostoevsky's work is his 'philosophy. Although the reader realizes all the time that the main "thesis" of *The Brothers Karamazov* is this very search for God, he will never respond to it in the same way in which he responds to the purely human conflicts in Dostoevsky. All we can say is that his "philosophy" is wanting in that intuitive insight which we so much admire in his descriptions of human beings and human situations.

Dostoevsky does not know the relaxing influence of nature which is given to most of the 19th-century novelists. Landscapes are singularly lacking in his novels ; he does not respond to music ( as, for instance, Tolstoy did ), nor to paintings or any other form of art. Only once in his novels do we come across a description of a painting, a work by Hans Holbein representing the figure of Christ after he had been taken down from the Cross ; his face is covered with blood and his body with putrid wounds. When Dostoevsky himself saw this picture in the Museum at Basel it produced an overwhelming impression upon him, an impression which he has depicted in *The Idiot*. It is again the response of the character that matters here, not the actual work of art itself. His universe was neither art nor nature, but the individual and his soul. That explains why most of his descriptions of landscapes are so unconvincing and unrealized. His characters live in cities, they rarely leave their rooms ; they spend their time "talking" among each other or debating things within themselves. The open air is unknown to them. And whenever they leave their houses, they find themselves lost in a reality the existence of which they had long ago forgotten. Again and again we read the same kind of description :

"The thaw increased steadily, a warm, unhealthy wind blew through the streets, vehicles splashed through the mud, and the iron shoes of horses and mules rang on the paving stones. Crowds of melancholy people plodded wearily along the footpaths, with here and there a drunken man among them."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *The Idiot*, p. 121.

Sometimes one of those possessed epileptic people will "see" nature around him. This is like a flash of lightning in the melancholy semi-obscurity of his novels. But these passages are extremely rare. The following is perhaps the most famous piece of nature description in Dostoevsky. It is spoken by a young woman, a lunatic :

"I would turn to the west again. And the shadow of our mountain was flying like an arrow over our lake, long, long and narrow stretching a mile beyond, right up to the island on the lake and cutting that rocky island in two, and as it cut it in two, the sun would set altogether and suddenly all would be darkness."<sup>1</sup>

Dostoevsky is hardly ever explicit about the outer appearance of his characters. They speak and act, they are not "seen" by the author. All his novels are monologues in the form of an almost continuous dialogue. But whenever Dostoevsky thought it necessary to introduce a character to the reader by means of a description, he would choose only those minute details that would attract our attention at once, should we meet this person for the first time. When, after some several hundred pages or more, we suddenly come across such a description as the following, there is something unexpected about it, something essentially forceful and vigorous :

"His articulation was wonderfully clear. His words pattered out like smooth, big grains, always well-chosen, and at your service. At first this attracted one, but afterwards it became repulsive, just because of this over-distinct articulation, this string of ever ready words. One somehow began to imagine that he must have a tongue of special shape, somehow exceptionally long and thin, extremely red, with a sharp everlastingly active little tip."<sup>2</sup>

Dostoevsky's art is like that of Rembrandt based on the contrast between light and shade ; everything in him is analysis of antagonistic forces, of human emotions and impulses ; but the

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1. *The Possessed*, I, p. 129.

2. *Ibid.*, I, p. 168.



synthesis he achieves in every one of his novels, the certainty that there is a pre-established unity in the human soul, leads the reader towards a deeper understanding of his characters and human situations. They have passed the test of suffering and pride, of humiliation and unbearable joy : they go back to the deep and primitive harmony of the universe as little children do, their souls purified and at peace with themselves. And the utter simplicity with which human conflicts resolve themselves at the end of his novels, places him side by side with the greatest painters of human emotions and conflicts : Aeschylus, Dante, and Shakespeare.

# DĀRĀ SHIKUH\*

Bikrama Jit Hasrat

## V

### MULLAH SHAH AND OTHER SAINTS

DARA SHIKUH's notice on the life of his "friend, guide and spiritual teacher", Mullah Shah, as recorded in the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*, is full and vivid, rich in anecdote and illustration, and resplendent with religious emotions and aphorisms. It is written with a frank directness as the outcome of a profound intimacy. "Mullah Shah is that sublime personality, to whom every invisible object is clear," he says in one of his verses; and "having him on my side, my mind fears not a hundred foes; O, you, who have made the house of Kādīrī (Dārā Shikuh) flourishing, may the Almighty keep you as his benefactor."<sup>90</sup> Briefly his life is divided into four sections: his birth and parentage; his spiritual gifts and miracles; his letters to Dārā Shikuh and a selection of his poetical compositions. For biographical details the most contemporary accounts are, Tawakkal Beg's *Biography of Mullah Shah*, Abdul Hamid's *Pādsbāhnama*, Mirza Muhsin Fani's *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib* and the *Mir'āt-ul-Khayāl*; circumstantial notices on his life are also recorded in Latif's *Lahore*, Nur Ahamad's *Tabkikāt-i-Chishtiya* and Bernier's *Travels*.

Mullah Shah Muhammad, known by the epithet of *Lisānullah* (tongue of God), a native of Badakhshān, was the son of Mullah Abdi Muhammad, the Qadi of Arsaka, a village in Badakhshān. For his nativity of that place, he was often called the "Pearl of Badakhshān". "A man enquired of me," says

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\* The series begin with Vol. V, Part III (New series) of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*.

90. *J.R.A.S.B.* Vol. V, No. I, p. 160.

Dārā Shikuh, " 'how is that the pearls are scarce in Bādakhshān ?' 'It is because,' I replied promptly, 'that the *La'l-i-Badakhshān* ( Mullah Shah ) has left that place'." <sup>91</sup> The date of his birth is not known, but according to Tawakkal Beg, he died in the year 1661 A. D. and was buried at Lahore close to his master Mīān Mīr, <sup>92</sup> but Bernier and Beale <sup>93</sup> both say that he died in Kashmir in about 1660, while 'Azam's *Tārikh-i-Kashmir* and Sarkar's *Aurangzeb* corroborate the former statement.

Soon after his arrival in India in the year 1614 A.D., <sup>94</sup> he came to Lahore and became the disciple of Mīān Mīr, whose great fame he had heard in Badakhshān. Two years later he left for Kashmir with a number of Kādiri adherents and settled down. Dārā Shikuh, who commanded an expeditionary force against the Persians in 1639 A. D. returned to Kashmir and remained there from March 1640 to September 1640 and during this period he met Mullah Shah. This incident he has mentioned in the *Safinat-ul-Awliya*. The slight acquaintance soon developed into intimate friendship and deep affection and in the same year as Tawakkal Beg tells us "that it was not without considerable difficulty that the Prince could induce the saint to accept him as a disciple in 1052 A. H. ( 1640 A. D. )." Dārā Shikuh narrates the incident graphically : <sup>95</sup> "When I went to see him for the first time, since he had not seen me before, he asked me who I was. 'I am a *faqir*,' I rejoined respectfully. 'But even the *faqirs* have a name ?' he asked. 'Nothing is hidden from you,' I replied. 'Now I know you,' he remarked and took me by the hand and seated me by his side. I said that my aspirations I had stated in the following quatrain :

Lost in my own self-consciousness, I seek the gnosis ;  
For in sincere faith I have placed myself in the  
hands of Mullah Shah.

91. *Safinat-ul-Awliya*. ( Lahore lithograph ).

92. Latif : *Lahore, Its History : Architectural Remains and Antiquities* (1892) p. 59.

93. *An Oriental Biographical Dictionary* p. 278.

94. Abdul Hamid : *Pādshahnāma* ( Cal. 1867 ) Vol. I, p. 388.

95. *Safinat-ul-Awliya* ( p. 124-25 ).

Walk in graciously, O dear, and whisper into my ears  
The Divine secret ; for I seek the Truth.

Smilingly he replied that he had discerned my utmost desires and remarked that I had lost my way and that he had found me again :

Those who in sincerity of faith seek the Fortune,  
Ultimately find their way unto it.  
The fortune, which symbolically means the gnosis of God  
Is invariably associated with the threshold of Mullah Shah."

Mullah Shah, according to Dārā Shikuh's observations, was a "man of wide intellectual outlook and a pantheist of sublime imagination and humanitarian tendencies." He had gained spiritual illumination by his great piety and hard devotional practices. A comprehensive account of physical austerities and spiritual exercises practised by him, is given in the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*.<sup>96</sup> These include, the regulation of breath,<sup>97</sup> constant night vigils, religious vows, incredibly long fasts, meditations and visions, etc. Mīān Mīr had a very high opinion of his spiritual attainments and all his disciples were entrusted to his care. In one of his quatrains he says :

The one who is initiated into the ways of Divine knowledge  
Is Mullah Shah—the Gnostic of the Path.  
The magic influence of his discourses is known to all and sundry ;  
Today he is addressed by the epithet of *Lisānullah*.

Mullah Shah's discourses to the disciples were on the different stages of the Path viz., *turk* (renunciation), *fukr* (poverty), *tagrīd* (celibacy), *istghana* (contentment), *twakkal* (faith in God), *riḍa* (quietism) and *taslim* (submission). Dārā Shikuh admits that his charming personality and profound knowledge

96. *Vide* ( p. 119-122 ).

97. "For seven years," writes Dārā Shikuh, "beginning soon after the evening prayers, late till dawn, he practiced the *Zikr-i-khaṣṭ*, by means of the regulation of breath and he taught me this method. . . ." ( p. 119 ). And with regard to the vigils, he says, "One of the hard disciplines, practiced by him for a little over thirty years, upto the present day, ( 1052 A. H. ) was that he never slept. Once I mentioned this fact to him, to which he replied, that he remained uniform in all stages and that for lovers sleep is unlawful." ( *opt. cit* ).

made everlasting impression on his mind, and that he decided to sit at his feet and to receive instruction from him into the mysteries of Divine Knowledge. But though himself used to hard devotional exercises, Mullah Shah imposed no stern discipline upon his royal convert and for him he had "to discover a shorter and simpler course in which he used his will power and magnetism and revealed to him the hidden aspects of spiritual knowledge."<sup>98</sup> Dārā Shikuh accounts for this inconsistency in the method of instruction. "Once he told me," he remarks, <sup>99</sup> "that he had abandoned all practices and that his meditation now consisted in the realisation of his own self and recited this verse :

The sweet odours of the Beloved emanate profusely from  
within my own self ;  
 For this reason, every moment, I hold in my arms, my own self."

Mullah Shah led a very simple and unostentatious life of poverty. No servants were kept, no meals were cooked and no lamps were lighted in his house and he used to sit in darkness. "One night as I attended upon him," says Dārā Shikuh, <sup>100</sup> "he asked some one to bring a light and then turning towards me remarked that he had ordered the light for me as he always meditated in the darkened cell and recited this verse :

The fire of your love illuminates our abode ;  
 In this darkened cell of ours a light we burn not.

Thereafter he remarked that there were many considerations for his preference of darkness because :

Darkness, if thou wert to realise, is the light of the Universal ;  
 In darkness, lies the 'stream of elixir' :  
 From this fountain-head, emanates the light of manifestations,  
 Many a thing I have to say, but I will speak not."

Mullah Shah was one of the most eminent Kādīrī teachers in India. A man of culture and refined literary tastes, he was

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Hasnāt-ul-Zīfān* : Aphorisms of Mullah Shah, p. 82.

100. *Sakīnat-ul-Awliyā* p. 119.

himself a scholar and poet of no mean distinction. As a mystic he was very outspoken and unconventional in his utterances, and as a theosophist his ideals stood higher than those of the exponents of the standard doctrines. As a liberal thinker, he believed in the fundamental uniformity of all religious beliefs. Overwhelmed by his own religious emotions, he had a vivid realisation of the close relation subsisting between human soul and God and conceived with ecstatic pleasure in the innermost recesses of his soul the Beatific vision. His letters to Dārā Shikuh lay emphasis on this aspect and give instructions on the sublimity of human soul and its ascent to God.

"The object in the creation of man is his attainment of the gnosis, for as it is said : 'the aim in the creation of mankind and *genii* is mainly for knowledge and truth' ; and as God hath said : 'verily I was a hidden treasure, when I desired to be known I created the universe'."<sup>101</sup>

Mullah Shah was the most eminent disciple of Mīan Mīr. The latter, a teacher of enormous influence, was of retired habits and contented disposition and regarded the attachment and devotion of Dārā Shikuh to the Kādiriya order of no great consequence, but the former, when he saw the Mughal prince won over to the fraternity, visualised in him the dream of its glorification and a not too distant supremacy over all other religious orders in India. Akbar and Jahangir had extended royal favours to the Chīṣṭiya sect and had made it very popular with the people. We know that Dārā Shikuh was not a religious propagandist, but none can deny, that had he ascended the Delhi throne, with royal patronage and propagation, he would have made "his own order" the leading sect of popular thought in India. Such were Mullah Shah's expectations. "When on the 7th of Jamādi-ul-Ākhir, on the eve of setting on an important expedition, I went to him to receive his benedictions," writes Dārā Shikuh,<sup>102</sup> "a

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101. *Ibid.*

102. *Ibid.* p. 180.

number of persons, pious and learned were in attendance. He introduced me to each of them and thereafter dwelt on various aspects of truth and reality of being. When I asked permission to leave, he gave me a letter in which he expressed himself freely. It began with the usual words of kindness and affection and said *that he had entrusted to my care the disciples of the Path, for he considered me as the most distinguished and fit person to impart instructions to them.* As I took leave, I begged that through his kind guidance I might carry my faith and convictions unimpaired from this world. To this he replied that my end would be well . . . . Thereafter I rose and placed my head on his feet. He took me by his hand and embraced me in exuberance of love and remarked : 'whosoever has joined the fold I leave them to you'."

There are two more references to this effect, which are mentioned by Dārā Shikuh : "After I had left, Mullah Sa'īd informed me that Mullah Shah expressed strong hopes that I would do my utmost for the propagation of the Kādiriya order and would win over multitudes to the fold." "And Mullah Miškīn told me," he writes at another place, "that one day Mullah Shah remarked that many a people he had initiated into the mysteries of the Path and had placed his reliance on them for the propagation of the order, but none of them came upto his expectations. He added that this young prince ( Dārā Shikuh ) would, without doubt, fulfil his ambition."<sup>108</sup>

Mullah Shah's letters to Dārā Shikuh<sup>104</sup> form a very interesting study. In contrast to the high-sounding word-jugglery and florid and ornate style, with which a prince of royal blood was usually addressed to, their beauty lies in their directness of appeal, natural sentiments, sound advice, sweet words and at times bitter rebukes. They are completely devoid of formal ambiguities and show that Mullah Shah's influence on the spiritual and moral life of the prince was immense and that

108. For full details *vide* the *Sakinat-ul-Awliya*, (p. 188-89).

104. Eleven letters of Mullah Shah are recorded by Dārā Shikuh ( p. 199-152).

the master and the pupil lived on the terms of most affectionate intimacy. In these letters Dārā Shikuh is addressed as, "May you behold the vision of the Beatific" ( letter 1 ) . . . . "You, who are initiated into the divine mysteries" ( letter 3 ) . . . . "I repose great confidence in your sagacity and farsightedness" ( letter 4 ) . . . . "My sincere friend whose equanimity of mind and love for truth is established" ( letter 6 ) . . . . "O spiritual and temporal king" ( letter 9 ). Their outstanding characteristic is that they are not addressed to a prince but to a neophyte of the Path and contain elucidation of various mystic doctrines, viz. gnosis of God, unification, faith, poverty, piety, detachment, etc. etc.

"May you attain the bliss of the Eternal," says one of the letters, "May the heart of the enlightened one be immune from the evil breath of his foes. Remember that the secrets of the fold should never be divulged to outsiders ; do keep them concealed. It should be clear to you that one should be less inspired in the company of those who have less benefit of the God's Grace ; do not be over-confident. It is evident that for the completion of one's work, exertions to the utmost are incumbent ; do exert yourself. He who is sincere-minded in his intentions is surely a lover and he who is lover is worthy of the bliss of the vision of the Beatific. The perfect man is he, who is not reprehended by anybody whether common people or inmates of the innermost circles ; who does not neglect the performance of any work enjoined upon either by the dogma of Islam or the path of esoteric Islam. First comes *gnosis* which is the effect of good company. The second is the *concentration* of mind which is the result of self-control and third comes the *law* which means conformity with mankind in general. Inwardly our every action must conform with the truth ; outwardly we should act like people at large. Love those who hold similar views and shun the hypocrites." Speaking of the above letter, Dr. Qanungo<sup>105</sup> remarks that it is a severe comment on some of Dārā Shikuh's



faults of character. Without taking notice of the capacity and the character of people Dārā Shikuh would communicate great spiritual mysteries and practices to them and neophytes in general. Mullah Shah, notwithstanding his detachment from the world, was not altogether indifferent to the stern realities of life, to which he draws the attention of his less practical-minded pupil.

In another letter he writes : "May you attain the bliss of the Beatific. Your letter and the book you have sent through Shaikh Muhsin have reached me. I have been much impressed by the feelings of love and affection expressed by you ; this is natural, for the precious commodity of Love is ever cherished by those of sublime vision : 'the goldsmith knows the worth of the gold and jeweller of the jewels.' God knows, how much gratified I was to know of your attainments and if for a moment you take to heedlessness it would diminish my pleasure. I have great faith in your sagacity and farsightedness and believe that if you keep into view the greatness of the Omnipotent's threshold and its dignity, ignorance which deprives a man of spiritual pleasures, would not come near you. This 'state' often overtakes those who have an access into the court of reality and truth. Beware and know that their fate has been placed in your hands." At another place he says, "Once you recognise Him, you would always do so. Never despair and endeavour to the utmost. For you who have found the Path, it is necessary. If you act otherwise, woe betide you and your pretensions of being a lover . . . ." <sup>106</sup>

Speaking of *Shari'at* and *Hakikat*, which ordinarily denote "soundness of outward state and maintenance of inward state" respectively, Dārā Shikuh quotes one of the aphorisms of Mullah Shah. "He said to me," <sup>107</sup> he writes, "O you, who adhere to the real faith, prayers are not obligatory for you, for at the moment

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106. *Ibid.*

107. *Hamāt-ul-Ārifīn* p. 82.

you are in the state of intoxication (*sukr*) and ecstasy. Intoxication is of higher degree than prayers (*niṁāz*) and in relation to God is nearer to Him. The Divine Beloved possesses the eyes of a lover. If the *sukr* be phantasmal (*majāzī*), prayers are prohibited for fear of pollution : an act for the preservation of sanctity of the latter. On the other hand, if the *sukr* be real, then too, prayers are not allowed ; in this case it is for the preservation of the sanctity of the former. Visualise the truth and act upto its ideals ; turn your eyes away from the exoteric and look into the hidden secrets. The *Kurān*, too, is not fully comprehensible to the casual. The Law (*Shari'at*) is the cause of the Path (*Ṭarikat*) which in its turn is the cause of the Truth (*Hakikat*)."<sup>108</sup>

Similarly Dārā Shikuh's description of Mulla Shah's conception of faith (*imān*) is also note-worthy. "Faith is three-fold," Mullah Shah once said : "First is the faith of commonality, which consists in verbal profession and verification : 'Faith is belief in God and the Prophet and the angels and the revealed books and in life after death and in hell and heaven.' Second is the faith of those of the inner circle, which consists in physical and mental obedience to any one of the Divine attributes, whichever illumines the mind ; such being the case with Moses, who could not forbear the light of Divine attribute. Third is the faith of those of the innermost circle,

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108. Both these terms are interpreted by the sufis of diverse orders in different manner. Some assert that the law is the truth, but orthodox theologians denounce this doctrine which is held by the *Carmathians* and the *Shi'ites*. "The proof," they argue, "that the law is virtually separate from the truth lies in the fact that in faith, belief is separate from profession." While others assert : "that the proof that the law and the truth are not fundamentally separate, but are one, lies in the fact that belief without profession is not faith, and conversely profession without belief is not faith." But according to al-Hujwari the difference between the two is established, while, at the same time, their mutual relations with one another cannot be ignored. The former denotes a reality which "admits of abrogation and alteration ; the latter, on the other hand, is a uniform reality from beginning to end, which does not admit abrogation." One is the creation of man, while the other is "God's keeping, preservation and protection." One may be compared to soul and the other to body and so one cannot be maintained without the existence of the other.

which is, in reality 'the gnosis, the acknowledgement' and acceptance' and consists in the absorption of all human attributes in search of God. This is possible when 'the veil of ego is lifted and the mind is illumined with the light of Divine manifestations. The dim recollection of conscious life fades and man is unmindful of time, place and distance.' "109

The second and the fourth sections of the notice on Mullah Shah's life, dealing with his miracles and his poetical compositions are not without interest. In the former, the miracles of Mullah Shah are of extraordinary character, ranging from his feats of physical and devotional exercises, viz. control of breath, night vigils, spiritual visions and dreams, etc., to his meeting with Khizar on the banks of the Ravi. "I have heard," says Dārā Shikhu,<sup>110</sup> "that once he chanced to meet Khizar ( may peace be on him ),, but he ( Mullah Shah ) took no notice of him. When I asked about this incident, he replied : 'One day I had gone to the Ravi to wash my clothes. A man emerged out of the river, and since I was in a state of meditation, he asked me to hand him over my clothes for washing ; for, he contended that I could not do two things at a time. To which I replied that I could. Upon hearing this, he vanished.' " Other miracles include : his divination of the secrets of the mind of the man when confronted with him face to face ( p. 114 ) ; his inordinately long fasts for the purification of the soul ( p. 125 ) ; his proficiency in the contraction (*qabḍ*) and expansion (*baṣṭ*),<sup>111</sup> ( p. 127 ) ; his spiritual visions (*rūyāt-i-bādil*), etc. etc.

Eminent persons whose aphorisms and sayings have been mentioned by Dārā Shikuh include the Prophet, those of the house of the Prophet and the Imams ( p. 2-4 ) ; Shaikh Junaid ( p. 10 ) ; Gauth-ul-thaklin Abdul Kādir Jilānī ( p. 12 ) ; Bayazīd Bistāmī ( p. 13 ), Shaikh Abu Bakr Shiblī ( p. 39 ) ; Imam-ul-

109. *Ibid.* p. 189.

110. *Ibid.* p. 128.

111. *Qabḍ* and *baṣṭ* denote the contraction of the heart in the state of being veiled and the expansion of the heart in the state of revelation. ( *Kaṣf-ul-Mahjūb* p. 874 ).

Muwahhaddin-Shaikh 'Ibn-ul-'Arabi ( p. 50 ); Saikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khair ( p. 52 ); Sahl bin Tusṭari ( p. 55 ); Abu Bakr Misrī ( p. 56 ); Khwaja Mu'in-ud-Din Chiṣṭī ( p. 57 ); Shaikh Najm-ud-Din Rāzī ( p. 67 ); Shaikh-ul-Islam Khwaja Abdullah Ansāri ( p. 75 ) and others. Besides numerous verses of Sufi poetry, aptly cited in connection with the exposition of various doctrines, are those of Jalāl-ud-Din Rūmi ( p. 19, 28, 30, 67, 140, 151 & 162 ); Shaikh Sa'idī ( p. 57, 71 ); Abdul Kādir Jīlānī ( p. 151, 163 ); Nizāmī ( p. 66 ) and Syed 'Alla-ud-Din ( p. 31 ). The verses and quatrains of Mullah Shah and Mīān Mīr are given on pages ( 28, 117, 124, 125, 130-131, 139 & 152-158 ) and ( 25 & 27 ) respectively. Five quatrains of Dārā Shikuh also appear on pages ( 19, 53, 61, 73 & 169 ) of the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*.

The fourth section contains a selection of the poetical compositions of Mullah Shah, comprising 10 *ghazals* and 18 *rūbāiyāts*. The *diwan* of Mullah Shah whose *nom de guerre* was *Shah*, according to Dārā Shikuh, "contains wonderful points and exquisite subtleties and is full of knowledge and mystic allusions. All these qualities are rarely met with in any other collection of poetry. It contains many *quatrains* and a commentary thereon, *ghazals*, *mathnawis* and a collection of his letters. Every verse thereof is unique and contains the meaning of the two worlds."<sup>112</sup> Judging the poetic excellence of Mullah Shah, from the few specimens recorded, ( which also depict Dārā Shikuh's poetic appreciation of current mystic thought ) we can, without hesitation say, that they represent elegance of language, sublimity of thought and grace of diction. His *rūbāiyāts* throw much light on his religious belief, and the ethical and moral principles preached by him. Some of the views expressed therein are positively heterodox and, according to orthodox Islamic conception, approach very near heresy. But the poetic latitude can be allowed to him ; for drunk with Divine love, he had departed from the fold of the orthodox and had

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112. *Ibid*, p. 152.

let himself adrift in the dangerous waters of gnosticism. He could not, therefore, escape the malicious remarks of the orthodox school who said that "this landed him on the benighted shores of infidelity."

Of Dārā Shikuh's correspondence with the saints, Mullah Shah, Mīan Mīr, Shah Muhibullah, Shah Dilruba and others, whatever has been preserved,<sup>118</sup> even in its fragmentary character, the main theme is the discussion of mystical doctrines of diverse nature and the clarification and exposition of doubts and misgivings in the mind of the young aspirant. "To the compendium of esoteric and exoteric sciences," he addresses Shaikh Muhibullah Allahabadi in one of his letters, "who is proficient in the comprehension of the stages of form and spirit . . . . Shaikh Muhibullah, this lover of the saints ( Dārā Shikuh ) sends his greetings and felicitations : I respectfully acknowledge your letter containing your answers to my questions with utmost gratitude and satisfaction ; its contents have enlightened me with your views on the subject and have given me pleasure and delight. Some of the answers have been exactly to my expectations and while the others I have identified with my spiritual longings and inclinations ( which are in confirmation with the holy *Kuran* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet of God ) . . . . For years I have been studying books on the 'inner state' of the saints but controversies being abundantly found therein, I have discarded them hereafter, devoting my whole self to the study of the mind, which is a boundless ocean ; where pure gems are always to be found :

Refer me not anymore to such books ;

For my conscious-self is an open book to me."

Another letter to Shah Muhammad Dilruba, the "veiled mystic and saint," celebrated for his piety and devotion, is very

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<sup>118</sup> These letters to my knowledge are as follows : 6 letters to Shah Muhammad Dilruba contained in the *Fayyad-ul-Kawanin* and reproduced in the *Ruka'at-i-'Alamgir* ( Vol. I p. 819-824 ) ; 2 letters to Shah Muhibullah Allahabadi ( Ibid p. 825-880 ) ; 1 letter to Sarmad ( Indian Antiquary 1924 ) and 2 letters in a MS. of the *Safna-i-Bahr-ul-Muhit* in Berlin Library ( Pertsch p. 40, 45 ).

interesting. "This saint," writes Dara Shikuh, "had selected for himself the corner of obscurity. He did not uncover his face and talked to people from behind a screen. Once he told me that he did not wish to expose his face to the vision of all. I remarked that to behold his face was a blessing. He then agreed that he would only uncover his face before those whom he thought as the men of the Path ; thus the commonality would, of their own accord, desist from approaching him . . . ."

The following letter of Shah Muhibullah is in answer to a few questions put by Dārā Shikuh and its elucidation by the former :

*Dārā Shikuh* : What is the true significance of the 'Great Veil' ( *Hijāb-i-Akbar* ) ?

*Shah Muhibullah* : Knowledge associated with mind is beneficial ; it constitutes a burden when related to body. Thus knowledge, which tends to perpetuate the fancy of duality, is in reality an obstruction. From another point of view, however, when it attaches itself to the light of limitations, without the individual being conscious of it, of a certainty it is the 'Great Veil' ; for, the acquisition of knowledge, of whatever species it might be, is an obstruction ; because the attributes envelop the Universal Person in a screen. The gnostics, therefore, in their discourses to the seekers on devotion, have not confined it to limitations.

*Dārā Shikuh* : Has the spiritual advancement an extremity ?

*Shah Muhibullah* :

O brother ! the Path leads to an endless track. Proceed, the way lies before you.

In relation to the Universal Person it is as you are already aware of it.

*Dārā Shikuh* : Is it possible to acquire spiritual perfection by soul-discipline ?

*Shah Muhibullah* : Such a question, coming as it is from a monotheist in search of Unity of God \*( Dārā Shikuh ), sounds

strange ! The individual is perfection in itself, for the soul provides him with true discipline. In fact, so long as he remains entangled in the whirlpool of fancy, he considers the manifestations apart from Him and attributes Divine Grace to it.

*Dārā Shikuh* : How can the mind be capable of holding the Infinite within its own self ?

*Shah Mubibullah* : Mind has an access to the Infinite for it is endless in its own end : and if this fact is not comprehended properly, it would not be possible for human mind to contain the Infinite.

*Dārā Shikuh* : Does the lover attain immortality with the Beloved ?

*Shah Mubibullah* : My soul ! these two terms of lover and beloved are known due to the felicity of the former ; so even after the attainment of gnosis by him, the torments in the *niche* of the grave still confront him :

Union with the Beloved is divine to the friends.

*Dārā Shikuh* : Does the lover attain union with the Beloved after death ?

*Shah Mubibullah* : *Death constitutes a bridge which links friend with friend.* Whatever exposition to this effect was given by the perfects, was the outcome of matured experience ; for, in fact, the perfection of man is unattainable without death.

*Dārā Shikuh* : How can we differentiate between love and affliction ?

*Shah Mubibullah* : Affliction is the ladder which leads to love, for it is said :

All in this Universe, in part or in whole,  
Constitute the arch of a bridge in Love's Path.

*Dārā Shikuh* : When Syyyid-ul-Ta'ifa<sup>114</sup> replied, "Turning towards the origin" in answer to, "What is the end?" what was its true significance ?

*Shah Mubibullah* : The *origin*, you must know, is the

diversion of vision from the reality, in consequence of a fancy for duality ; and the *end* is a complete comprehension of the reality. Other reason being the soul's journey towards the *origin* of the Physical Plane ( ' *Ālam-i-Nasut* ) which is the seat of the most gracious ; its *end* marks declivity from height, which is a position for the Imams of gnosticism. This is the Physical Plane because the universe is involved in a cycle of encirclements, the centre of the circle, revolving along the circumference is an end in itself.<sup>115</sup>

*Dārā Shikuh* : "*Verily he is transgressing and ignorant.*" Is this verse in condemnation of man or in his commendation ?

*Shah Mubibullah* : It is said in compassion for him.

*Dārā Shikuh* : Since the universe is not perishable, how can we account for the effacement of things ?

*Shah Mubibullah* : According to : *Everything is perishable except His face* : things perish. Whatever remains is due to its own capability and metonymy of its absolute nature.

*To be continued.*

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115. Reference is here to the fact that the beginning of everything was the earth atom ( *nugtah* ).



## GANDHI MAHARAJ

We who follow Gandhi Maharaja's lead  
have one thing in common among us :  
we never fill our purses with spoils from the poor  
nor bend our knees to the rich.

When they come bullying to us  
with raised fist and menacing stick,  
we smile to them, and say :  
your reddening stare  
may startle babies out of sleep  
but how frighten those who refuse to fear ?

Our speeches are straight and simple,  
no diplomatic turns to twist their meaning ;  
confounding penal code  
they guide with perfect ease the victims  
to the border of jail.  
And when these crowd the path of the prison gate  
their stains of insult are washed clean,  
their age-long shackles drop to the dust,  
and on their forehead are stamped  
Gandhiji's blessings.

*Prabir Ranath Tagore*

Santiniketan,

15. 12. 40.

( Translated from the original Bengali by the author. ,



Photograph taken during Gandhiji's last visit (Feb. 1940) to Santiniketan



# MUKTA-DHARĀ

K. R. Kripalani

## *An Appreciation*

MUKTA-DHARA,\* from which the play takes its name, is a mountain spring whose waters, rushing down the slopes of Uttarakut, irrigate the plain of Shiu-tarai, whose people are held in subjection to the King of Uttarakut. In order to enforce this subjection more effectively, the King of Uttarakut aims to control the source of their economic well-being and to that end has had a great dam erected to prevent the waters of Mukta-dhara from reaching the plains below. It was a difficult and hazardous operation, but the skill of the royal engineer Bibhuti, utilising the resources of modern science and with the help of conscripted labour, has at last successfully achieved the feat, though at considerable loss of life. A mighty engine-tower, outsoaring the trident on the Temple of Siva on a mountain peak, has been erected. The play opens with the King and the citizens of Uttarakut preparing to participate in a religious festival in honour of the Machine. The King as well as the bulk of the people of Uttarakut ( for the little imperialism depicted in the play is of the modern "democratic" type in which the people are more royal than their ruler, where a subject race is concerned ) are very proud of the Machine and quite confident that the poor and defenceless people of Shiu-tarai would now for ever be at their mercy. Neither the recurring wail of the poor, demented mother, looking for her son, one of the conscripted victims sacrificed in the building of the dam, nor the warnings of the simple, god-fearing folk who presage ill for such colossal pride and greed, touch their hearts.

The Crown Prince Abhijit, however, professes open sympathy for the people of Shiu-tarai and protests against Bibhuti's

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\* *Lit. Free Current.* The original Bengali drama by Rabindranath Tagore was first published in 1922. The English translation published here is by Marjorie Sykes of Bantiniketan.

soulless achievement. The character of the Prince provides the main psychological interest of the play. In him love of freedom and sympathy for the oppressed discover their appropriate symbolism, or as the author so aptly puts it,\* their objective counterpart, in the fate of Mukta-dhara, whose free current has been imprisoned by the dam. The emotional significance of this symbolism gains in intensity till it becomes a passion, when the Prince learns that he was not the son of the King but a foundling picked up near the source of Mukta-dhara. "This unexpected revelation profoundly affects his mind, making him believe that his life has a spiritual relationship with this waterfall ; that its voice was the first voice which greeted him with a message when he came to the world. From that moment the fulfilment of that message becomes the sole aim of his life, which is to open out paths for the adventurous spirit of Man."† The Prince determines to sacrifice his life in an attempt to liberate the imprisoned current by forcing the dam at a point which he happened to know was weakly built. He succeeds. The leaping torrent breaks free, carrying the body of its foster-child in its turbulent lap. Like some of Ibsen's later dramas, the social motive of the play, if it had any, seems to dissolve at the end in an undefined sense of mystic self-fulfilment.

The author has also re-introduced into the play that remarkable character, the Ascetic Dhananjay, who first appeared in *Prayaschitta* (Atonement), published in 1909. In that play, as in the present one, Dhananjay teaches the people to resist their ruler's unjust claims non-violently but fearlessly. "As soon as," he exhorts the subject people, "you can hold up your head and say that nothing has power to hurt you, the roots of violence will be cut through . . . . Nothing can hurt your inner manhood, for that is a flame of fire. Only the material self is hurt. That which is flesh feels the blow and whines and dies. (*To his listeners*) But you stand open-mouthed—don't you under-

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\* See the author's note to an English translation of the play, entitled *The Waterfall*, which appeared in the *Modern Review*, May, 1922.

† *Ibid.*

stand ?” A disciple : “We understand *you*, but not your words.” Dhananjaya : “Then woe betide you !” Both the personality and the words of Dhananjaya are a remarkable anticipation of the shape that the struggle for Indian Independence was to assume later under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. In the earlier play Dhananjaya even leads the people in a sort of no-rent campaign.

Perhaps no other play of Rabindranath expresses his political convictions with such directness and force. Technically too the drama is not overburdened with any sub-plot or extraneous incidents, which might break the continuity of the main theme. ( Incidentally the Greek classical unities of time and place are fully observed. ) Against the grim background of the towering menace of man’s diabolical skill, symbolised in the Machine, pass and re-pass processions of men and women, tyrants and sycophants, idealists and devotees, passionate rebels against a pitiless imperialism and its servile agents ( so amusingly portrayed in the schoolmaster ), and the multitude of simple folk, with their quaint humour and unsophisticated wisdom. In their innocent contentions and way-side comments the author has found ample scope for his irony. Indeed, it is these spectators rather than the main actors themselves who keep the stage occupied for most of the time. Very little of the real drama takes place before our eyes, the rest we watch through the reactions on the minds of these different spectators.

The drama is packed with meaning and rich in suggestions which may tempt critics into a variety of interpretations. But the author has gently warned his readers against missing the main significance of the play which is psychological and lies in the growing identity that is achieved in the Prince’s mind between his own spirit and the current of Mukta-dhara. The last desperate act of self-sacrifice, the awful nature of the consummation sought and achieved by the Prince, which brings the play to its close, leaves one with a sense of the tragic splendour of man’s spirit, silencing all contentions for the

moment. What happens to the people of Shiu-tarâi, we have forgotten to enquire.

There is no doubt that *Mukta-dhara* is one of the most moving and well-knit of the author's dramas. Mr. Edward Thompson has called it "the best of his prose dramas." Without endorsing so categorical a judgment, it is well worth quoting the English critic's excellent appreciation of the play.

"It is a reasoned though highly allegorical presentation of his convictions, as expressed during many previous years, on modern politics. It has many strands of significance woven into it, so that it is like shot silk suggesting many colours ; the play's achievement is that in it he has attained a synthesis of his different convictions and messages. His deep distrust of all government by machinery and of all prostitution of science to serve violence and oppression, his hatred of a slavish system of education, his scorn of race-hatred and of all politics which seek to make one tribe dependent on another instead of risking the gift of the fullest freedom, his certitude that it is in freedom that God is found,—all these are so prominent that each may with justice be claimed as the play's message. Through all, as a tender undertone, runs the murmur of the *Free Current*, a haunting sound in the soul of the boy whose foster-mother she was and whose lifeless body, after he has broken her fetters, her waves are to carry majestically away. There are impressive passages, as where the *Machine* is seen, sinister against the sunset, crouching over the land and its life, overtopping even God's temple ; or where the noise of the breaking dam and the raging waters is first heard. All through the play sounds the menace of God's gathering anger at the hardness of men's hearts and the sordidness of their hopes. Finest of all is the constant quiet drift of folk along the roads, the procession of life. It is the greatest of his symbolical plays."\*

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\* Rabindranath Tagore : By Edward Thompson. Oxford University Press.

# MUKTA-DHĀRĀ

A DRAMA

BY

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Translated by*

MARJORIE SYKES

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## MUKTA-DHĀRĀ

*Scene : The mountainous land of Uttarakut, "The Peak of the North", on a road leading to its mountain temple of Shiva the Terrible. In the distance a great Machine towers into the sky, its crest seemingly touching the clouds, and confronting it is the trident which crowns the temple of Shiva. In a mango garden by the roadside stands the tent of King Ranajit, for tonight at new moon the lights of solemn worship will be lit in Shiva's temple ; the king goes there on foot, and is now resting by the wayside. Bibhuti his Royal Engineer has succeeded after many years of endeavour in damming the springs of Mukta-dhara with the might of his steel machine. In honour of this extraordinary feat the people of Uttarakut have come to hold festival in the temple courts of Shiva. The company of sannyasis who perform the temple rites are spending the whole day in processional pæans ; some hold censers of burning incense, some carry conches and gongs, and accompany their songs by rhythmic beating of the gong.*

*Enter procession, singing :*

Shiva the Terrible, God we acclaim Thee,  
Lord of Destruction, yet uttermost Peace.  
In darkness of doubting our sunrise we name Thee,  
Saviour in conflict, in bondage Release.  
Shiva the Terrible, Giver of Peace. . . .

*( The sannyasis go out singing )*

*Enter a pilgrim from a foreign land, carrying the prescribed worship offerings. He meets and addresses a citizen of Uttarakut.*

*Pilgrim :* What is that which stands so high against the sky ? It is a fearsome sight.

*Citizen :* Don't you know ? You are a stranger, I suppose. That is the Machine.

*Pilgrim :* Machine ? What machine ?

*Citizen :* Bibhuti the Royal Engineer has been working at

it these twentyfive years past. See, it is finished now, and so today is a festival.

*Pilgrim* : And what is its purpose ?

*Citizen* : It has bound fast the springs of Mukta-dhara.

*Pilgrim* : Ugh ! It looks like the head of some skeleton demon, with its gaping, grinning jaws—a demon that lies in wait for your sleeping city. With that sight before you day and night, your living spirits will surely shrivel and stiffen like a blasted tree.

*Citizen* : Our life is not so easily damaged ; there is no call for fear on that score.

*Pilgrim* : It may be so, but that is no fit thing to stand in the presence of the sun and stars ; it would be better to keep it hid. Can you not see how it seems to irritate the very sky ?

*Citizen* : But are you not going to the temple worship tonight ?

*Pilgrim* : That is what I set out to do, as I have done every year at this season. But never before have I seen the sky above the temple darkened by such a monster. When I came in sight of it suddenly today, my whole body shivered with a nameless fear. There is something blasphemous in the way it has outsoared the very temple tower. I will go and make my offering, but my mind is not at rest.

*Enter a woman wearing a white cloth over her head which covers her whole body and trails on the ground.*

*Woman* : Suman ! My Suman ! ( *To the Citizen* ) Little father, you have all returned, but my Suman is not even yet come home.

*Citizen* : What is your name ?

*Woman* : I'm Amba of Jonai village. And he—he is the light of my eyes, the breath of my life, my Suman.

*Citizen* : What has happened to him, daughter ?

*Amba* : They have taken him away—I don't know where. I had gone to worship Shiva in the temple—I came back and found they had taken him.

*Pilgrim* : Then they must have taken him to work at the dam of Mukta-dhara.

*Amba* : I heard that they had taken him this way—away to the west of Gouri's Peak there—but I cannot see as far as that ; I can see no path beyond it.

*Pilgrim* : What is the use of crying ? We are just going to the evening worship in Shiva's temple ; it is our great day today, you come too.

*Amba* : No, father, it was to Shiva's temple I went that day too. Since then I've been afraid to go out to worship. And mark my words, our prayers never reach the Father now ; they are stolen on their way to His shrine.

*Pilgrim* : Why, who steals them ?

*Amba* : The same who took Suman from my heart. I don't know yet who he is. Suman ! My Suman ! My boy Suman !

( *All go out* )

*A messenger from Abhijit the Yuvaraj of Uttarakut  
meets Bibhuti on his way to the temple.*

*Messenger* : Lord Bibhuti, the Yuvaraj has sent me to you.

*Bibhuti* : What is his will ?

*Mess* : After long years of effort you have brought into bondage our springs of Mukta-dhara. Time after time your dam has burst, countless men have perished under falls of earth and sand, countless others have been carried away by the flood. But today at last—

*Bibhuti* : Their lives were not given in vain. My dam is completed.

*Mess* : The people of the foothills of Shiu-tarai do not yet know it. They cannot believe that it is in the power of any man to keep from them the waters that God has given.

*Bibhuti* : God gave to *them* merely the water ; to *me* He gave the power to withhold the water.

*Mess* : They are still without a thought of evil ; they don't know that within a week their growing fields . . .

*Bibbuti* : Why should you talk of their fields ? What have their fields to do with me ?

*Mess* : Why, did you not build your dam for that purpose—so that their fields should wither and die ?

*Bibbuti* : No, I built it to prove that the mind of man can triumph over all the might of sand and stone and water arrayed against him. I had no time to contemplate the loss of any farmer's petty field of maize.

*Mess* : The Yuvaraj asks, is not the time even now come ?

*Bibbuti* : No, for I contemplate the splendour of the power of the Machine.

*Mess* : And cannot the cries of the hungry break in upon your contemplation ?

*Bibbuti* : No ; my dam breaks not before the fury of the waters, and my Machine quails not before the power of tears.

*Mess* : Have you no fear of curses ?

*Bibbuti* : Of curses ? Look you, when there were no labourers to be had in Uttarakut, we went at the king's command to every house in Chandapattana, and seized for our needs all sons above eighteen. Many of them never returned to their homes, yet my Machine has triumphed over the curses of all those mothers. When one is fighting the power of the gods, he cares little for the curses of men.

*Mess* : You have built this monument of your fame, and the glory is yours. The Yuvaraj now bids you break down of your own will the work of your hands, and so attain an even greater glory.

*Bibbuti* : When the monument was still incomplete, it was mine alone ; but now it is the property of all Uttarakut. I have no longer the right to destroy it.

*Mess* : The Yuvaraj says that he will take upon himself that right.

*Bibbuti* : What ! The Yuvaraj of Uttarakut says such a thing ? Does he not belong to us ? Is he a Shiu-tarayan ?

*Mess* : He says that it is yet to be proved whether

Uttarakut is ruled by the Machine only, or whether the law of God does not run there also.

*Bibhuti* : I tell you that by the might of my Machine I myself will take rank as God, and on me rests the burden of the proof. Tell the Yuvaraj that I have left no road open by which the strangle-hold of my machine may be relaxed.

*Mess* : The God of destruction does not always travel by the highroad. No eye of man sees the cracks and fissures which secretly await his coming.

*Bibhuti* : (*startled*) Cracks ! What is that you say ? What do *you* know of cracks ?

*Mess* : What should I know ? But be sure that He who uses them will find them out. (*The messenger goes out*)

*Enter some citizens of Uttarakut, on their way to the temple festivities. They see Bibhuti.*

*1st. Cit* : Well, engineer, you're a wonderful fellow. Given us all the slip, you have, and got right ahead of us, while we knew nothing about it.

*2nd. Cit* : That's the sort of thing he's always done. He would be for ever worming himself forward on the quiet, when you least expected it, and outdoing everybody. Cropheaded Bibhuti of Chabua, our own village ! We used to go to school together, and Kailash the schoolmaster used to box our ears, all alike. And now look at him, leaving us all behind and making such a name for himself !

*3rd Cit* : Hi, Gobru, you with the basket there, why do you stand gaping like that ? You've seen Bibhuti before, haven't you ? Get out the garlands and garland him.

(*They begin to garland him*)

*Bibhuti* : Stop, stop, that's enough . . . .

*3rd. Cit* : What, enough ? Why, you've become a great man, all of a sudden, and we've got to do the thing properly, you know. Your neck ought really to be as long as a camel's, and all Uttarakut ought to be loading you with garlands up to the tip of your nose.

*2nd. Cit :* I say, old man, Harish the drummer hasn't turned up yet.

*1st Cit :* The rascally lazybones, he needs a drumming on the skin of his own back.

*3rd Cit :* What's the use of talking like that ? If it comes to drumming, he's far ahead of us.

*4th Cit :* I thought we might have got hold of Bishay Shamont's ceremonial car today, and taken old Bibhuti in procession. But they say that even the king is going to the temple on foot.

*5th Cit :* Well, it's a good thing you didn't. Do you realise what a state it's in ? I borrowed it the other day for my boy's wedding . . . and I had to pull it far more than it pulled me.

*4th. Cit :* Well, what we can do is to carry Bibhuti on our shoulders. Let's do that.

*Bibhuti :* Hi, what are you trying to do ?

*5th. Cit :* No, no, this is quite as it should be. You were born and brought up in the lap of Uttarakut, and now you've climbed on her back. You're head and shoulders above everyone else.

( *They rest their staves on their shoulders and lift Bibhuti* )

*All :* Hurrah ! Hurrah for Bibhuti, the Royal Engineer !

( *All go out singing, carrying Bibhuti shoulder high* )

All hail, Machine, we worship thee,

We bow to thee, we honour thee,

Machine, O Lord Machine.

Thy flames and thunders rend the sky

And all thy rumbling wheels reply

In swift and sonorous majesty ;

We bow to thee, Machine.

In one defiant onrush hurled

Thy conquering fires sweep the world,

Machine, O Lord Machine.

Thy power melts the stubborn ore,  
Shatters the old rock's living core,  
And moves still things unmoved before—  
All hail, all hail, Machine.

A vulture thou, whose talons tear  
The bowels of earth, and lay them bare,  
Machine, O Lord Machine.  
Thou art a cloud, beneath whose lee  
Sinister tempests scud and flee  
To darken earth and air and sea.  
All hail, Machine, Machine.

Thou grim magician, binding still  
The very elements to thy will,  
All hail to thee, Machine.  
Thou hast the captive world in fee,  
And we thy servants worship thee,  
We bow to thee, we honour thee,  
O Lord, O Lord Machine.

*Enter, from the tent, King Ranajit and his Minister.*

*Ranajit* : You have never been able to keep the people of Shiu-tarai under proper control. Now at last, by his mastery of Mukta-dhara, Bibhuti has found a way of enforcing their obedience. But you don't seem very enthusiastic, *mantri*. Are you jealous of him ?

*Minister* : Your pardon, Maharaj, far from it. It is no part of our work to wrestle against earth and stones with pick-axes and spades. Our tool is diplomacy, our commerce is with the minds of men. It was I who counselled you to give the Yuvaraj responsibility for the control of Shiu-tarai. Had you kept my counsel, he would have bound them in ties of affection no less strong than the steel bonds of Mukta-dhara.

*Ranajit* : And what has been the fruit of his rule ? Taxes two years in arrears & There have been plenty of famines

in Shiu-tarai before this, but they always used to pay their taxes.

*Minister* : He was beginning to win for you a more valuable thing than taxes, when you ordered him to return. We should not despise the young in matters of government. You must remember that in times of intolerable suffering, the strength of their grief and sympathy makes young people greater than their elders.

*Ranajit* : You are for ever changing your tune. You have told me again and again that a king should govern his subjects as a rider does his horse, from the vantage-point of a higher seat ; and that the art of ruling an alien people consists in such control. Did you not say so ?

*Minister* : Yes, I did. The position was different then, and my counsel was fitted for the times. But now . . . .

*Ranajit* : I never had any wish to send the Yuvaraj to Shiu-tarai.

*Minister* : Why, Maharaj ?

*Ranajit* : They are not our own people, but aliens, and if we rub shoulders with them too familiarly, their respect for us will be destroyed. One's own folk may be won by affection, but outsiders must be ruled by fear.

*Minister* : Maharaj, you have forgotten the real reason for sending the Yuvaraj to Shiu-tarai. For some time he had seemed very restless in spirit, and we suspected that he had somehow got a hint of the truth about himself—that he is not of royal birth, but was picked up at the foot of the falls of Mukta-dhara. And so to keep his mind occupied . . . .

*Ranajit* : Yes, I know all about that. Almost every night he used to go and sleep below the fall. When I heard about it I sought him out there one night and asked him straight, "What is the matter, Abhijit ? Why are you here ?" And he replied, "In the sound of this water I hear my mother's voice."

*Minister* : I too once asked him what had come over him, and how it was that I hardly ever saw him in the palace. He



said, "The knowledge has come to me that I was born on earth to open up a highway."

*Ranajit* : I have lost my belief in the prophecy that this boy would be the ruler of a great empire.

*Minister* : It was Abhiramswami himself, your *guru's guru*, who made that prediction.

*Ranajit* : He must have been mistaken. I have had nothing but loss in my dealings with this lad. Ever since my grandfather's time the road over the Nandi Pass has been blocked, so that the wool-merchants of Shiu-tarai could not trade in foreign markets. Now Abhijit has thrown open that road. The price of food and clothing in Uttarakut will rise, you know.

*Minister* : He is young, isn't he ? The Yuvaraj was looking at it from the point of view of Shiu-tarai . . . .

*Ranajit* : But I call that treachery against his own people. Then there's that Vairagi Dhananjay of Shiu-tarai, who is wandering about stirring up disaffection—I am certain he has a hand in it too. We shall have to suppress that fellow, rosary and all. He must be taken into custody.

*Minister* : I do not presume to oppose the Maharaj's will. But you know well, Sire, that there are evils which are safer left free than suppressed.

*Ranajit* : That is as may be. That consideration does not lie in your province.

*Minister* : No sire, but it is a consideration I would urge upon you.

*Enter a sentinel*

*Sentinel* : Sire, your uncle is approaching, the Maharaj Visvajit of Mohangarh. (*Exit*)

*Ranajit* : There's another one. He is the ringleader of the set who are spoiling Abhijit. An uncongenial kinsman is like a hunchback's hump, always hanging on behind, impossible to get rid of, and a continual nuisance to bear . . . . What is that noise ?

*Minister* : The devotees are making procession round the temple.

*Enter the devotees, singing :*

Shiva the Terrible, God we acclaim Thee,  
 Purging the darkness with flame of Thy breath ;  
 Thou art the Truth, and Thy thunders proclaim Thee :  
 Bane of the wrong-doer, Guide across death,  
 Shiva the Terrible, God we acclaim Thee . . . .

*( They go out )*

*Enter Ranajit's uncle, King Visvajit of Mohangarh.*

*He is dressed wholly in white, and has  
 white hair.*

*Ranajit :* Reverent greeting, uncle. I had not hoped for the good fortune of your presence today at our worship of Shiva.

*Visvajit :* I came to tell you that Shiva will not accept today's worship.

*Ranajit :* Such words of evil omen are an insult to our festival . . . .

*Visvajit :* And why a festival ? Why have you imprisoned those fountains of free water which the God of gods sends down from heaven that all who thirst may drink ?

*Ranajit :* Why ? That I may dominate my enemies !

*Visvajit :* And have you no fear of making Almighty God your enemy ?

*Ranajit :* Is not He the patron-god of Uttarakut ? He himself is glorified in the triumphs of his city. And so He takes our part, and withdraws the gift that He himself had given. He will pierce Shiu-tarai with the spears of thirst, and cast it in the dust before the throne of Uttarakut.

*Visvajit :* Then your worship is no true worship, but merely the payment of a wage.

*Ranajit :* Uncle, you are a partisan of foreigners, and an enemy of your own people. And through your teaching Abhijit too is failing in his duty to his own kingdom.

*Visvajit :* Through *my* teaching ? Was I not once in your party ? When you raised mutiny in *Chandapattana*, was it not

I who suppressed that rebellion with fire and sword ? Afterwards this boy Abhijit found his way into my heart, and it was *he* who brought *me* light. Then I saw that those whom I had injured blindly in the darkness were indeed flesh of my flesh. You recognized in him the mystic foreshadowings of an imperial destiny ; seeing them, you welcomed him to your house ; and do you now seek to confine him to this petty throne of Uttarakut ?

*Ranajit*. I suppose it was you who told Abhijit of his being picked up under the falls of Mukta-dhara ?

*Visvajit*. Yes, it was I. It was the day of the Festival of Lamps, and he was a guest in my palace. In the sunset light I noticed him standing on the terrace, gazing towards Gouri's Peak. I asked, "What do you see, my brother ?" He said, "I see the roads, as yet uncut, which shall in future times cross those unscaled heights and make us neighbours of distant lands." And even as I listened I thought, "The mother who gave him birth by the springs of Mukta-dhara was free of the limiting walls of home, and who shall bind and confine her son ?" I could no longer keep silent, but said to him, "Brother, your birth was by the wayside, and from that very moment the Lord of the Hills gave you welcome to the open road ; no conch-shell summoned you within the four walls of a home."

*Ranajit* : Now at last I understand.

*Visvajit* : What do you understand ?

*Ranajit* : That from the time he heard this story Abhijit's affections became estranged from the royal house of Uttarakut. His opening of the Nandi Pass road is an arrogant proclamation of that estrangement.

*Visvajit* : What harm is done by that ? A road once opened is a road for all—for Uttarakut, no less than for Shiu-tarai.

*Ranajit* : Uncle, you are my kinsman, and respect is due to your age ; therefore I have been very patient. But I can be so no longer, for you are a traitor to your own people ; I command you to leave this kingdom.

*Visvajit* : I can never give up you and yours. If you give me up, I must needs endure it.

( *He goes out* )

*Enter Amba, going towards the king.*

*Amba* : What folk are these ? Look you, the sun is setting, and my Suman is not yet returned.

*Ranajit* : Who and what are you ?

*Amba* : I—I am nothing, nobody. *He* was my all in all—and they took him away along this road. Is there no end to this road ? And is my Suman journeying still, on and on unresting, to where beyond Gouri's Peak all things sink into the western sky, the sun, the light and all ?

*Ranajit* : *Mantri*, I suppose this must be . . . .

*Minister* : Yes, in the work of building that dam . . . .

*Ranajit* : ( *to Amba* ) Do not weep for your son. I know of him, and that he has today received the world's last and greatest gift.

*Amba* : If that were true, he would bring that gift to my arms in the evening, for am I not his mother ?

*Ranajit* : He will indeed bring it for you in the evening. But that evening is not yet come.

*Amba* : May your words be true, little father ! I will wait for him here, along the temple road. Suman ! ( *She goes out* )

*The schoolmaster of Uttarakut enters with his boys.*

*Master* : You'll be getting a taste of the cane, I can see. Loudly now, shout ! Jai, Rajarajeswar !

*Boys* : Jai, Rajara—

*Master* : ( *slapping a boy or two within reach* )—jeswar !

*Boys* : —jeswar !

*Ranajit* : Where are you all going ?

*Master* : Sire, you are going to confer honour on our Royal Engineer Bibhuti, so I am taking the boys to share in the rejoicings. They have learnt from childhood to honour everything that is to the glory of Uttarakut and I do not want them to miss any opportunity for participating in it.

*Ranajit* : They all know, I suppose, what Bibhuti has done?

*Boys* : (*jumping and clapping their hands*) Yes, yes, he has stopped up Shiu-tarai's drinking water.

*Ranajit* : Why did he do that?

*Boys* : To make them smart.

*Ranajit* : And why should he make them smart?

*Boys* : Because they are wicked men.

*Ranajit* : How, wicked?

*Boys* : Everybody knows it, they're *very* wicked, *awfully* wicked.

*Ranajit* : But you don't know why they are wicked?

*Master* : Of course they know, Maharaj. Now, you, didn't you read? Didn't you read in your book? (*whispering*) Their religion is rotten.

*Boys* : Yes, yes, their religion is rotten.

*Master* : And besides, they're not like us. Come now, speak up! (*He points to his nose*)

*Boys* : They haven't got high-ridged noses.

*Master* : Right, now what has our professor proved? What does a high-ridged nose show?

*Boys* : The greatness of our race!

*Master* : Good! And what will that great race do? Come, speak up! . . . they'll conquer . . . Out with it, do! . . . they'll conquer everyone else in the world, won't they?

*Boys* : Yes, everyone.

*Master* : Have you ever heard of the men of Uttarakut being defeated in war?

*Boys* : Never, never!

*Master* : Didn't our former king Pragjit, with two hundred and ninety three men, drive back an army of thirtyone thousand seven hundred and fifty southern barbarians?

*Boys* : Yes, yes!

*Master* : Maharaj, you will surely see the day when these very boys will be a terror to the miserable wretches who are born outside Uttarakut. If not, I am no true teacher. I do not

forget for a moment what a great responsibility is ours. It is *we* who mould men, your ministers but make use of them. Yet be pleased, sire, to compare the salary they draw with ours.

*Minister* : But those boys themselves are your reward.

*Master* : Well spoken, sir, the boys themselves *are* our reward. Alas, but food is dear. Just think, cow's *ghee*, which used to be . . .

*Minister* : All right, all right, I'll see about this *ghee* of yours. Now go, it is nearly time for the worship.

( *The schoolmaster goes out with his boys.* )

*Ranajit* : This schoolmaster of yours has nothing in his head but *ghee*, cow's *ghee*.

*Minister* : There's certainly a good deal of the cow about him. But, Maharaj, fellows of this kind have their uses. They do mechanically, day after day, exactly as they are told. Things would not run on such oiled wheels if they had more sense.

*Ranajit* : What is that in the sky, *Mantri* ?

*Minister* : You are forgetting, Maharaj. That is the top of Bibhuti's machine.

*Ranajit* : It has never showed so clearly before.

*Minister* : The storm this morning cleared the air, that is why we see it so well.

*Ranajit* : Does it not look to you like a demon's defiant fist shaken in the face of the sungod, while He grows red with anger ? It was not good to make it so arrogantly high.

*Minister* : It looks to me like a spear piercing the gentle breast of our sky.

*Ranajit* : Well, it is time now to go to the temple.

( *They go out* )

*Enter a second band of Uttarakut citizens*

*1st. Cit* : You must have noticed that Bibhuti always avoids us nowadays. He would like to rub out altogether the record of his upbringing, the fact that he was one of us. One

day he'll find out that it's not good for the sword to get too big for its sheath.

*2nd. Cit :* Whatever you may say, brother, Bibhuti has certainly made a name for Uttarakut.

*1st. Cit :* Oh, let that alone, you are beginning to make far too much of him. That dam there cost him all he had, and it broke down at least ten times.

*3rd. Cit :* And who knows that it will not break again ?

*1st. Cit :* You've seen that mound, have you, on the north side of the dam ?

*2nd. Cit :* Why, what about it ?

*1st. Cit :* What about it ? Don't you know that ? Every one who has seen it says. . . .

*2nd. Cit :* What ? What do they say ?

*1st. Cit :* What do they say ! Shamming stupid, are you ? It's as plain as the nose on your face ! Why, from one end to the other . . . oh, why talk ?

*2nd. Cit :* No, tell us a bit more about it, go on.

*1st. Cit :* How you gape, Ranjan ! Just wait. You'll understand clearly enough when all of a sudden. . . .

*( He ends with a gesture )*

*2nd. Cit :* Whew ! What are you saying, old man ? All of a sudden ? . . . .

*1st. Cit :* Yes, my friend. Well, Jhogru will tell you. He's got everything taped out and weighed up.

*2nd. Cit :* I will say this for Jhogru, he doesn't lose his head. When everyone else is shouting Bravo, he coolly fishes out his measuring rod.

*3rd. Cit :* Well, my lad, some folk say that all Bibhuti's learning. . . .

*1st. Cit :* I know myself that he stole it all from Benkot Varma. . . . Now *he* was a really clever chap. What a head ! My word ! And yet Bibhuti gets all the credit,—and he, poor fellow, dies of starvation.

*3rd. Cit :* And was ~~it~~it merely of starvation ?

*1st. Cit :* Well, what is the use of discussing that ? Lack of food, or food given him by a certain person, who knows ? Besides, someone may overhear us, and there are gossip-mongers everywhere. The men of this country can't bear to hear good of others.

*2nd. Cit :* Well, whatever you say, the man. . . .

*1st. Cit :* Well, there's no wonder in that. Think where he was born ! My great-grandfather was a man of Chabua village—you've heard his name, haven't you ?

*2nd. Cit :* Naturally. Who in Uttarakut hasn't ? He was that . . . what d'ye call it. . . .

*1st. Cit :* Yes, yes, Bhasker. There was no such expert snuff-maker in the whole district. King Satrujit would never go a day without his snuff.

*3rd. Cit :* Well, there'll be time enough for this talk later, let's go to the temple now. We are Bibhuti's fellow-villagers, after all ; we'll garland him, and it's we who'll sit on his right hand . . . .

*Voice off :* Do not go, brothers, do not go ! Go back !

*2nd. Cit :* Hark to that ! Old Batu has come out.

*Enter Batu, his hair unkempt, a tattered blanket thrown round him, and a crooked branch in his hand for a staff.*

*1st. Cit :* Why, Batu, where are you going ?

*Batu :* Have a care, little brothers, have a care. Don't go that way, go back while there is still time.

*2nd. Cit :* Why ? Why do you say that ?

*Batu :* There will be sacrifice, human sacrifice. They took my two lusty grandsons by force, and they have not come back.

*3rd. Cit :* To whom will they sacrifice, uncle ?

*Batu :* To Thirst, the Demon of Thirst !

*2nd. Cit :* The Demon of Thirst, ! Who may that be ?



**Batu :** One who, the more he gets, the more he wants. His dry tongue grows longer and longer, like a *ghee*-fed flame.

*1st. Cit :* You must be mad. We are going to the temple of Shiva, and what Thirst-Demon is there ?

**Batu :** Haven't you heard ? Today they are going to thrust Shiva from his temple, and Thirst will sit enthroned on the altar.

*2nd. Cit :* Hush, hush, madman ; the men of Uttarakut will tear you to pieces if they hear you talk like that.

**Batu :** Yes, they are throwing mud at me, and the boys are pelting me with stones. They all say that my two grandsons are greatly blessed in having given their lives.

*1st. Cit :* Well, that's true.

**Batu :** True ? If life does not spring from the offering of life, if nothing but death is the fruit of death, where is the blessing in such utter loss ? Shiva will never endure it ! Little brother, have a care ! Do not go that way.

( *He goes out* )

*2nd. Cit :* He makes me shudder—look how my flesh creeps.

*1st. Cit :* Why, Ranju, you are afraid of shadows. Come, let's go.

( *They all go out* )

*Enter Abbijit and Rajkumar Sanjay.*

**Sanjay :** I do not understand, Yuvaraj, why you are leaving the palace.

**Abbijit :** There are things which you will not understand. I have come out under the open sky, because a voice rang in my ears, and cried to me that the living current of my spirit must overleap those palace walls of stone.

**Sanjay :** We have noticed your restlessness for some time. The invisible ties which bound you to us have been growing slack. Have they fallen away completely today ?

**Abbijit :** Sanjay, do you see that form in the sunset over

Gouri's Peak ? It is like a bird of flame, spreading its wings of cloud and flying towards the night. That is a picture of my life's adventure, painted on the heavens by the setting sun.

*Sanjay* : But do you not see also, Yuvaraj, how the machine thrusts itself into the very heart of the sunset ? It is as though the flying bird's breast is pierced by an arrow, and with drooping wings it is falling into the valley of night. No, the signs are evil, and it is time for rest ; come to the palace, Yuvaraj.

*Abhijit* : Where there is bondage, can there be rest ?

*Sanjay* : How have you come to feel, after all these days, that there is bondage for you in the palace ?

*Abhijit* : I knew it when I heard that they had imprisoned Mukta-dhara.

*Sanjay* : I do not understand the meaning of your words.

*Abhijit* : God writes here and there in things external His secret Word for the souls of men. And the hidden places of my spirit are revealed in those falls of Mukta-dhara. When they bound her dancing feet in the iron fetters, I was shaken to the depths of my being, and I knew with sudden certainty that even so the throne of Uttarakut must fetter the springs of my spirit. In this journey it is freedom from those fetters which I seek.

*Sanjay* : Yuvaraj, take me as your comrade on the road.

*Abhijit* : No, brother, you must discover your own path. If you follow me, I shall hide your true path from you.

*Sanjay* : Do not be so stern, your sternness wounds me.

*Abhijit* : You know my heart, and will understand me in spite of the wounds.

*Sanjay* : I have no wish to make question of your call and your pilgrimage. But, Yuvaraj, the evening is come, and the music of the nightfall comes floating from the palace tower. Is there no call for you in that ? Glory there may be in your strenuous purpose, but has the grace of life no value too ?

*Abhijit* : My brother, it is for the sake of that grace and its value that the stern fight must be fought.

*Sanjay* : Do you remember, the other day, you were struck with wonder to see a white lotus bloom lying before the mat where you sit for your morning worship ? None told you of who had culled it in secret, in the dim dawn before you woke ; but should you not remember at this hour the sweetness of that inspired little act ? Is not your mind haunted still by the image of that timid one, who hid herself but could not hide her worship ?

*Abhijit* : Most surely I remember. And just because such love exists, I cannot endure that hideous, steel-toothed monster that mutes the music of earth and grins and guffaws against the sky. Just because I love this Paradise of God, I am going to fight the demons which menace it.

*Sanjay* : The evening light lies swooning on that blue hillside. Does it not bring to your heart the shadow of tears ?

*Abhijit* : The shadow is there, and my heart also is full of sorrow. Do not think me unfeeling, or that I revel in sternness. Look at that bird, sitting alone on the topmost branch of the pine tree. Will it seek its nest, or will it travel on through the darkness to the forests of some far, strange land ? I do not know ; but I *do* know that as it sits so quietly gazing into the sunset, its very silence sings in my heart of the loveliness of earth. And here and now I salute each smallest thing that has sweetened my life by its beauty.

*Enter Batu*

*Batu* : They wouldn't let me go on, they beat me and turned me back.

*Abhijit* : What has happened, Batu ? Your forehead is bruised and bleeding.

*Batu* : I had gone out to warn everyone, and was begging them not to go that way, but to turn back.

*Abhijit* : Why, what has happened ?

*Batu* : Don't you know, Yuvaraj ? They will instal the

Thirst-Demon today on the altar of the Machine, and there will be human sacrifice.

*Abhijit* : What talk is this ?

*Batu* : Their altar is stained already with the blood of my two grandsons poured out on its foundation. It's a thing of sin, and I thought to see it crumble and fall of itself. But it is still unfallen, and Shiva has not awakened.

*Abhijit* : It will fall ; the time is come.

*Batu* : Then you have heard ? You have heard the call of Shiva ?

*Abhijit* : I have heard.

*Batu* : Alas, then there is now no rest for you ?

*Abhijit* : No, none.

*Batu* : Do you see how the blood runs from my head, and my limbs are smeared with dust ? And will you endure, Yuvaraj, when your very heart is torn ?

*Abhijit* : By the grace of God, I shall endure.

*Batu* : When all around become your foes ? When your own people revile you ?

*Abhijit* : I must perforce endure.

*Batu* : Then there is nothing to fear.

*Abhijit* : No, there is nothing to fear.

*Batu* : Good, then remember Batu. I also shall be on that road. You will know me even in the darkness by the sign-manual that Shiva has set in blood on my forehead.

( *Batu goes out* )

*Enter Uddhav, the king's sentry*

*Uddhav* : Why did you open the Nandi Pass Road, Yuvaraj ?

*Abhijit* : To save the people of Shiu-tarai from continual famine.

*Uddhav* : But the Maharaj has a kind heart, he is ready to help them.

*Abhijit* : When the right hand, in its niggardliness, has closed against them the road to plenty, the bounty of the left

hand cannot save them. I have cleared them a path by which provisions may freely come and go ; I cannot bear to see poverty dependent on charity.

*Uddhav* : The Maharaj says that in clearing the Nandi Pass you have knocked the bottom out of Uttarakut's food-vessel.

*Abhijit* : I have freed Uttarakut from the shame and misery of being for ever a parasite on Shiu-tarai.

*Uddhav* : You have done a foolhardy thing. I dare not say much more, but the Maharaj has received information. If you can, get away at once. It's not safe even to be seen talking with you on the road.

( *He goes out* )

*Enter Amba*

*Amba* : Suman, my boy Suman ! Have none of you seen the road by which they took him ?

*Abhijit* : Have they taken away your son ?

*Amba* : Yes, westwards over there, where the sun sets and the day comes to an end.

*Abhijit* : I am going that way.

*Amba* : Then remember the words of a sorrowing woman. Tell him, when you see him, that his mother is watching the road for his coming.

*Abhijit* : I will tell him.

*Amba* : Little father, may you live for ever. Suman, my Suman !

( *She goes out* )

*Enter the devotees, singing :*

Shiva the Terrible, God we acclaim Thee ;

Lord of Destruction, yet uttermost Peace.

In darkness of doubting our sunrise we name Thee,

Saviour in conflict, in bondage Release :

Shiva the Terrible, Giver of Peace . . . .

( *They go out* )

( *To be continued.* )

## REVIEWS

*THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS* : by Dr. Bhagavan

Das, M.A., D. Litt. Second Edition, greatly enlarged, 1939.

The Kashi Vidya-Pitha, Benares.

Price Rs. 2/- net.

WE are very glad to welcome this unique work on Comparative Religion from the pen of the well-known saintly philosopher of Benares, whose writings, covering several volumes, large and small, on subjects religious, philosophic, educational and sociological, as also political (in a higher sense), have already attracted the attention of a wide circle of readers and have been appreciated highly by learned scholars and eminent thinkers both in India and outside. Those who are familiar with the other works by the author, and have read them carefully following out the course of his thoughts as embodied in them, will not fail to trace out, in his earlier writings, the germs of what he offers in the present volume.

The main trend of this mature thought was presented in a systematic form in the first edition of the book published in the year 1932. It was then a small volume of 279 pages only. The second edition, which came out in September 1939, covers now over 700 pages. The topics treated are found to be *almost* the same in both the editions ; only the second one is enriched with further elaboration of the matters treated and enlarged with fresh quotations of parallel textual passages from the standard scriptures of the different Faiths brought in for comparison. These additions in the second edition have no doubt considerably enhanced the value of the work and lent a stronger support to the main contention of the author. It is evident that preparation of this unique work must have taken years of extensive studies and penetrative researches. It is not known if any such earnest and laborious attempt has hitherto been made in the subject, and undertaken on similar lines, by any other writer, in this country or abroad, and presented in such convincing manner as has been done by the present author. It is bound to open the eyes of those who are inclined to claim an exclusive truth for the faiths they profess and fanatically fight for. By studying this book in the proper and an impartial spirit they will realise, it is hoped, that they are either ignorant of the true nature of their 'sacred' professions or are forgetful of the real and essential teachings of the founders or exponents of their respective religious tenets. Their contest will then appear to be with the mere external forms, which are of historical origin by circumstances which do not deeply touch the essential

spirit of their Faith. The present work is intended to show what that essence is and brings home to the mind of earnest and sincere religious aspirants and students the truth that in essentials all faiths have the same core, more or less explicitly. And this must be the case, if humanity is *essentially* one, as it actually is. And the present author has with a penetrative insight, indicated the spiritual basis of every individual self as lying in the universal self, which is the same for all, finding expression on similar lines in their lives, however different they might otherwise appear to be outwardly. This is particularly brought out by the author in the first chapter of the work, treating of the universal basis of all religions and supported by relevant quotations from the scriptures of the different faiths recognised as living and having a greater or less extent of profession.

The three lengthy chapters that follow are devoted rather to the practical aspects of religious life, classified according to the three fundamental traits of human mind. Here too the author has not been sparing in lending support to his learned exposition from the original texts regarded as authoritative in the different faiths, all indicating a marvellous unanimity in the fundamentals. The last but one chapter deals with the problem of sound education, in its wider and deeper aspect, as also with the *role* of a true educationist, as it should be if approached and solved in the light of the common spiritual nature of man as evidenced by the discussions of the previous chapters. The last chapter of the present edition sums up in brief the gist of the conclusions of the whole treatment about the main topic undertaken and executed so elaborately in the body of the work.

Intellectually, and spiritually as well, the days of old divergent faiths in their external forms appear to be doomed, and the time has come to look about for a religion of universal value which all human beings may follow and practise in life without any distinction of race or nationality, social status or sex, caste or creed. If our life is to be soundly laid on a spiritual basis, as it should be for real peace and true prosperity, there is no other way to that in the day than an open espousal of a Religion Universal, which the broad-minded author has endeavoured to present in its essentials in this unique and admirable work, written, not with any 'home-made' ideas, but soundly based on recognised teachings or writings of old prophets and rishis. It is hoped the book will find a wide circulation among readers belonging to different faiths and have such 'practical' appreciation as it pre-eminently deserves to have.

P. B. Adhikari.

**MANAVA-DHARMA-SARAH** : by Dr. Bhagavan Das, M.A., D. Litt.

Published by Kashi Vidya-Pitha, Benares.

Price Annas 8 only.

THIS is a very interesting work written in Sanskrit verses mostly in the *sloka* style and metre, the perusal of which will remind the reader of the texts of *Manu-Samhita*, if he happens to be familiar with them. It comes as a surprise from the pen of one whose writings have hitherto appeared mostly in English and in the philosophic style of prose. The language is so simple and the discourses so clear and impressive that one undertaking its study is likely to run on with its easy flow until he reaches the terminus. It covers 270 pages of thick print in the *nagri* script, divided into several sections treating of different but allied subjects—biological, psychological, sociological, political, ethical and religious. The model followed by the author looks like the *Dharmasastra* of the sages Manu and others, and yet it is pre-eminently modern in its outlook and treatment. By calling it *modern*, it is not meant to be entirely original, as the term might suggest. The bulk of the discourse is based on the older texts, mostly Vedic or what directly or indirectly follows from this source—the *Upanisads*, *Smriti-sastras*, *Itihasas* and *Puranas*. Only the interpretation and presentation of the older teachings may be said to be modern in outlook and purpose. In reading the book one gets the impression of a Manu reappearing in the garb of the author, offering the same instructions as the older prototype did, only making the teachings suitable to the present age.

Of the various subjects dealt with in the course of the 'versical' discourses, the principal and fundamental one appears to be *social organisation* on the lines of the scheme of the ancient sages, particularly Manu and Vyasa, as interpreted by the author and accommodated to modern requirements, keeping, as far as possible, the same structural forms and retaining the same spiritual basis and purpose. Under this scheme, the theme which the author has repeatedly brought in for discussion is the age-old problem of what is called *Varnasrama-vidhi* ( the principle of division of society according to *Varnas* now understood in the sense of Castes ) and of individual life according to *asramas* ( the four recognised stages through which that life should develop under the Scheme. ) The author particularly emphasises the need of the former division according to *Varnas* as the most desirable basis of any social organisation that may be of permanent value to humanity. But he rejects the current mode of division according to birth ( *Janma-varna* ) which has been carried to the extreme creating a hideous number of castes and subcastes. Originally the division was into four classes based on natural and functional differences between man and man



( *Svabhava-karma-varna* ) and it was not the intention of the scheme that it should be hereditary as it came to be subsequently made under social or political circumstances when the original principle was either forgotten or neglected. Nor was the division based on mere differences of complexion as the term *varna* might suggest by its literal meaning. This ancient scheme of division of men according to their natal tendencies and consequent functional capacities appears to the author to be so sound for any desirable social organisation that he would suggest the adoption of this ancient scheme of Vedic India, as formulated and presented by Manu in his *Dharma-sastra*, with necessary modifications to make it suitable for the present age. And he appears to be so optimistically confident that nothing but the adoption of this scheme would serve the purpose of any social organisation in removing the troubles of the day or making them less pernicious.

Now the question is—Can any scheme of social organisation on similar lines be adopted in the modern age ? It is doubtful if that can be effectively done on a large scale. It surpasses our understanding how this scheme could be revived in its ancient form or spirit. And even if that were attempted daringly in any special section of humanity as an experiment, would it be successful ? The organisers might try hard and keep it under control during their life-time. But could it be made permanent ? We are afraid it would again run its old course from the *Karma-jati* to *Janma-jati* with all its evil consequences, or it would die out in time as it is actually doing now among the 'higher' classes and 'enlightened' members of Hindu Society. As a matter of fact, the present day tendency is found to be advancing towards something of the kind, though not exactly to any division of classes by Varna, as the author would have it. Would it be desirable to introduce any clear-cut division of the kind, however sound the principle might appear to be ? We appreciate the enthusiasm with which the author upholds the scheme and the ideal underlying it ; we value the sound criticisms he offers on the existing state of things in human society. But the doubt stands how far the plan he suggests is feasible.

P. B. Adhikari.

*THE TESTAMENT OF IMMORTALITY* : an Anthology edited by N. G. Faber and Faber, London.

THE illusory securities of a sophisticated urban life tend to screen from the eyes of "civilised" man the fundamental rhythms of birth and death, of growth and decay ; and it is usually only when the shock of a personal bereavement tears aside that veil of convention, that he is brought face to face with reality, and seeks for himself with urgency the answer to the

ancient question of Job : "If a man die, shall he live again ?" Today, however, over a large area of the world, and especially in Western Europe, the conditions of modern war have stripped away for millions of people all illusion of physical security, and made death and bereavement on a large scale an ever-present possibility. There is therefore a peculiar appropriateness in the appearance in these times of an anthology such as this, dealing with "the positive assurance of a life beyond death", and published by the author, as he says, "in the belief that a need which I felt is shared by others."

Perhaps in the nature of the case no anthology can ever be completely satisfying to anyone except its author. Just because personal taste enters so largely into the choice, the reader will nearly always miss some favourite poem or passage which he himself would have included. But on the other hand he will find new treasures which he did not know before, or see old treasures in a new light, and can thus enjoy the delights both of recognition and of discovery. *The Testament of Immortality* is rich in the variety of the sources on which the compiler has drawn ; ancient Egypt and India stand side by side with modern America ( which is especially well represented ) ; a passage from St. Augustine neighbours an extract from the *London Times* ; Sufi, Hindu and Christian mystics all give their testimony ; letters, memoirs, poetry and philosophy are all laid under contribution. The result is stimulating, and the lack of any formal arrangement, either in the book as a whole or within its different sections, is rather an advantage than otherwise. It prevents the reader from looking for what is not there—a logically developed philosophical position—and encourages him to appraise each passage or poem for itself, as the expression of the insight attained by one great personality into a universal mystery.

Here and there in the book errors have crept in which are doubtless due in most cases to printers' oversight, though when they occur in a familiar poem they obtrude themselves and jar unpleasantly. Masfield's grand lines "*By a Bier-side*" are misquoted in a manner which detracts seriously from their dignity and strength. Such a blemish is the more regrettable in a book which otherwise maintains a high standard in the type and arrangement no less than in the quality of the material.

Marjorie Sykes.

*THE NUMBER OF RASAS* : by Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A., Ph.D.

Published by the Adyar Library, Adyar, Pp. xxii & 192.

IN this volume of ten chapters—the chapters were originally published in the form of articles in the *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras—the

author undertakes a double task. In the first place he outlines the development, through some fifteen or more centuries, of a number of related and contrasted doctrines concerning the number and nature of *Rasa*-concept in Sanskrit Poetics. In the second place he sets forth what he believes to be the essential points for a correct numbering of the *Rasas*.

An investigation into the literature on a particular subject and the study of the theories and concepts embodied in that literature should go hand in hand. Unfortunately, in many a field of old Indian culture, such a combination is a rare occurrence. In some cases we have only historical accounts of the literary output on the subjects concerned, while in others we have descriptions of what are believed to be the main doctrines of particular systems of thought with scanty reference to the history of their evolution. Sanskrit Poetics is going to be an honourable exception in this matter. While scholars like Dr. S. K. De and P. V. Kane were, in their pioneer work, principally concerned with furnishing an elaborate account of the literature and a good treatment of the subject, a host of scholars have seriously taken up detailed historical investigations of various individual theories and doctrines expounded and elaborated by numerous writers at different times.

The work under review gives in ten chapters a comprehensive and scholarly account of the history of some peculiar and original views and of the controversy over the exact number of different *Rasas* in Sanskrit Poetics from Bharata ( beginning of the Christian era ) down to Jagannath ( 17th century ). The views of different writers have been clearly set forth and fully explained with profuse quotations from published as well as unpublished works. The handling of the historical elements is extremely skilful. Dr. Raghavan has an unusual gift for presenting complex material in such a way as to make it seem intelligible and significant to the lay reader without missing the finer points of interpretation that are of interest to scholars. In the first five chapters of this study, both likenesses and divergences in the thought of a number of ancient writers on literary criticism who assert the inclusion of the Quietistic ( *Santa-rasa* ) as against its exclusion are vividly displayed, and some of their implications suggested. In the succeeding chapters, a similar treatment is given to the divergent opinions of the writers who discuss topics like ( i ) *Rasas* other than the generally accepted ones, ( ii ) The different varieties of the same *Rasa*, ( iii ) New accessory moods, ( iv ) Are all *Rasas* pleasurable and ( v ) lastly the *Rasa*-synthesis. Although the author discusses all these problems more or less in detail, the main part of his discussion, to quote the foreword by Prof. M. Hiriyanna, is concerned with the admissibility of the Quietistic as the ninth *Rasa*. A brief reference to it may not be out of place.

The Quietistic, far from not being a *rasa*, as it is argued by some scholars, is the highest type of *rasa*, the crowning of all æsthetic, intellectual and moral fulfilment. Analysing the nature of the Quietistic we find that the entire mental fabric remains from the very beginning void of all unrest as well as dullness. It is concentrated on the inner spirit, and, as such, the psychosis is best suited for the appreciation of the Quietistic ; and hence it is called the *rasa* par excellence.

There is a class of thinkers who emphatically deny that the Quietistic has a place in the drama, though they are not prepared to repudiate its very existence. The drama being primarily meant for stage-representation, the Quietistic is out of place in it as it is capable of being enacted by one who is possessed of *sama* (tranquility). But, had it been a truth, the representation of the Terrible and the Furious would have been impossible, as the actor is not really possessed of the corresponding permanent emotion. Another objection may be put forward from the side of the audience that the vocal and instrumental music, an indispensable part of dramatic representation, does not permit the *Sahṛdaya* to form the peculiar psychosis, necessary for the proper appreciation of the *rasa*. But it may be argued that there is music, and music, as such, is certainly not opposed to the tranquility of mind. Thus does Dr. Raghavan, following the instance of Jagannath, establish the claim of the Quietistic to be called a ninth *rasa* in the *Natya* even.

In conclusion it should be mentioned that the author has not only analysed and explained the all-pervasiveness of *rasas* and showed the process of their evolution, but also the reverse process of synthesis has been explained and by this process he has arrived at one *rasa* as the *rasa* or the cardinal principle in life and literature. *Rasa*-experience being comprehensive of two elements—one ontological and the other psychological—is a composite whole, of which contradictory attributes can be predicted. This apparent contradiction in its Constitution sharply demarcates *rasa* from other experiences and this is the reason why it has been characterised by all writers on Poetics as a supernormal ( *alaukika* ) experience. Hence, a sympathetic mind will read in them one principle, and declare with our author, Dr. Raghavan, the eternal truth.

There is a full index of authors and works appended at the end, showing the kind of reference and notes on which the study is based and supplying details of information prized by the student of Indian literary criticism. The author, as well as the Adyar Library of Madras, is to be congratulated for bringing out this excellent work.

Nagendranath Chakravarty.

**KRISHNA AND HIS SONG :** by D. S. Sarma. ( Published  
by International Book House, Ash Lane, Esplanade Road,  
Bombay. Pp. 93. Price : Re. 1/8/- ).

"THE *Gita* is *par excellence* the Song of Krishna," says Professor Sarma in the opening chapter and then goes on to establish the title of Krishna to the rank of a world-teacher. Towards this end, he has touched upon the fundamental aspects of the truth as enunciated in the *Bhagavad-Gita* under the following heads : Krishna,—the teacher of Non-violence, Dharma—mechanical and organical, freedom through service ; rest in work and work in rest : devotion ; meditation ; action ; knowledge of the One and devotion to Humanity. As these are problems in which the man of the world is vitally interested, the *Gita* is called "the layman's Upanishad." Thus, Life is presented as a synthesis of various values and viewpoints which, broadly speaking, fall under the categories of ethical and metaphysical,—"the former setting forth what man ought to do and the latter what God is." Consequently, what at times seems to be contradictory is only complementary ; for example, now God is referred to as the Supra-personal Absolute and again as the personal Iswara, "who creates, protects and destroys all beings," while the truth is that He is both. Further, "the *Gita*", says the author, "is unique among our scriptures in that it insists that even the highest mystic should do service to society and should worship God in all beings"; hence, the reconciliation of morality and religion, scriptural authority and Self-realization, solitude and society.

Professor Sarma's short studies in the many-sided teaching of Krishna are marked by his usual clarity of thought, simplicity of style and earnestness of the enquiring spirit. Those who cannot read the original in Sanskrit text or commentary will find *Krishna and his Song* handy as well as helpful.

G. M.

**PREPARATION FOR CITIZENSHIP :** By Sophia Wadia.  
( Published by International Book House, Ash Lane,  
Esplanade Road, Bombay. Pp. 72.  
Price : Re. 1/- ).

"THE present world confusion is due to a false evaluation of the principle of heterogeneity", says the author. The true evaluation, according to her, is a spiritual concept of Democracy, as laid down by the great Teachers of Humanity, who emphasised the truth of the oneness of all life. As the *Katha Upanishad* says : "Of the measure of the thumb, Purusha, the Spirit,

dwells ever in the heart of all beings as the Inner Ego." The Spirit expresses itself, however, in various forms, so our system of education, society and the State should join hands in creating for the citizens an atmosphere in which the latter's diversities of types, temperaments, tastes and talents will be related to the truth of One Life "as the rays of the sun are related to the sun." Truly does the author observe, "The State is a playground for human spiritual evolution."

The great problem of Democracy, then, is right education, which consists in cultivating capacity for "gaining perception and conviction in all matters in life"; i. e., self-education, self-discipline, self-knowledge,—in other words, knowledge of our soul-nature. This will bring home to man the truth that "the very essence of Democracy is the greatest good of the largest number" together with its corollary of dedicating oneself and one's work to the service of humanity. Thus will be obviated the ugly existence and conflict of "have's" and "have-not's", the so-called "backward" and "progressive" communities, the "saint" and the "sinner". For, in the economy of Life all these have their proper place and purpose.

In short, though the thesis of the author in her present book is practically the same as expounded by her in her "Brotherhood of Religions," yet the attempt at application of the truth of One Life to our several current problems has made *Preparation for Citizenship* stimulating.

G. M.

*LIFE OF SORABJEE SHAPOORJEE BENGALÉE, C. I. E., :*

by Nowrojee Sorabji Bengalee

( Price and Publisher's name not mentioned ).

BOMBAY is rightly known as a city where the beginnings of a proper public life in our country were laid during the last century. The subject of the biographical sketch ( which is illustrated and is both in English as well as in Gujarati ), under review, who died in 1893, at the age of 63, was a pioneer in several social, political, educational and economic reforms, not only in his own Parsi community, but also in the field of making some of the present-day civic institutions in Bombay, like the Municipal Corporation and the vernacular press, examples in integrity, efficiency, and broad-based humanism. The story of Sorabji's rise from poverty to power reads like a romance; it is, therefore, of absorbing interest to the young. More. It affords a fascinating study in the evolution of Bombay as the nerve-centre of our Nationalism. The various incidents, mentioned in the biography, confirm the author's estimate of Sorabjee "as a front-rank leader of his time" who, in dealing with others, was "straight as a die" and who,

as a public man, was "actuated by a high and serious purpose, disinterested, independent and showing unflinching courage and determination." If history, as Carlyle says, is "a series of biographies" then the above biography is an epitome of the history of Bombay of the seventies and eighties of the last century.

G. M.

*ENLIST INDIA FOR FREEDOM*: by Edward Thompson.

( Gollancz. 2s. 6d. )

APATHY, born of almost deliberate ignorance, towards India and the aspirations of her people, among the ruling class in England is at the bottom of practically all the badness and madness of the British Indian administrative system. And whatever can be done to dissipate the darkness which clouds the mind and blurs the vision of our masters is welcome. Nobody today is perhaps better fitted for this task than Dr. Edward Thompson, whose association with Bengal is even today remembered with affection by thousands of his students. Though he left India nearly two decades ago, he has kept alive his interest in the country. His knowledge about India is quite up to date for he has made almost every other year a journey to India to see things for himself and is also known to be intimate with some of the most important of our political leaders. I remember he was at Wardha when the Congress Working Committee took the decisive step of calling out the Congress Ministers from office.

The book, within the short span of 120 pages, contains a mine of useful and pertinent information about India and I fervently hope the book will be widely read by, and be known amongst, the people for whom it is meant. The chapters, particularly on the Moslems and Indian Princes, are most important. They very conclusively drive home the hollowness of their respective claims, astounding alike in their immensity and falsity. How I wish it were possible to distribute gratis a pamphlet containing at least these two chapters to the members of Parliament!

Whether India can still be retrieved for the British Empire is an interesting speculation, which it would be risky for us to enter into at the moment. One cannot, however, but agree with the irrepressible Dr. Johnson that most schemes of political improvement are very laughable things.

A. K. O.

*TWILIGHT IN DELHI* : A Novel by Ahmad Ali.

The Hogarth Press, London, Price 7 s. 6 d. net.

THIS is the first novel in English by an author whose name should be familiar to the readers of "New Writing." The author, we are assured, is also one of the leading literary lights in Urdu and belongs to the group of young writers who call themselves "Progressive." Not knowing Urdu, we are deprived of acquaintance with his work in that beautiful language, but we hope his novels in Urdu are of better quality than the one under review. The novel sets out to give us an intimate glimpse into the life of two generations of an old Muslim family of Delhi, which retains poignant memories of the vanished Moghul grandeur. Members of a proud and virile race which once ruled in Delhi have now perforce turned traders and clerks and live at the mercy of imported rulers. How great has been the moral and mental degeneration caused by this change, how slowly and day by day physical and moral squalor invades the life of a defeated race, is the undertone of the author's theme. It is a pathetic picture. The brave, proud and sensuous have become bitter, sentimental and voluptuous. No doubt the author is aware of a new ferment in the national consciousness, of a new India burning into shape out of the havoc of the old,—but the heroes of that new India will come of another stock. Anyway, the author in the novel under review is not concerned with the new, but with the decaying, glory.

The novel's defect is that it is much more of a chronicle than a character study and tends to drag on as a record of commonplace details in the daily life of an Indian household. To foreign readers, unfamiliar with such life, the novelty of it may prove entertaining, even "fascinating." We have the testimony of no less a critic than Mr. E. M. Forster to that effect. Perhaps the book is meant for such readers only. We await the young writer's next novel with interest.

K. K.





# INDEX TO VOL. VI. NEW SERIES.

( Arranged Subject-wise )

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Part</i>
Andrews, Charlie	Autobiographical	9	I
„ „	Rabindranath Tagore	1	I
„ Reminiscences	Gurdial Mallik	35	I
Andrews, as a Writer	Marjorie Sykes	57	I
Civilization and Progress	Rabindranath Tagore	287	IV
Dara Shikuh	Bikram Jit Hasrat	67	I
„ ( Continued )	„	133	II
„ „	„	331	IV
Dostoevsky: A Revaluation	Dr. A. Aronson	317	IV.
East in the West, The	C. F. Andrews	91	IIa -
Ethics of Hunger- Strike, The	P. B. Adhikari	79	Ia
Gandhiji on Riches & Rich Men	Nirmal Kumar Bose	21	I
Gandhiji on the State	„	163	II
Gandhi, Mahatma, Idealism of	Dr. P. T. Raju	235	III
Gandhism, How far do I believe in,	Nirmal Kumar Bose	299	IV
Hinayana Buddhists, what might learn from Christianity	Prof. James Pratt	225	III
Khadi, Why	S. N. Mozumdar	265	III
Khaqani's Poetry	Prof. Hadi Hasan	248	III
Iqbal, Sir Mohammad, The idealism of	Dr. P. T. Raju	103	II
Memories	Krishna Hutheesing	311	IV
My Boyhood Days	Rabindranath Tagore	147	II
„ ( Continued )	„	187	III
<i>Mukta-Dhara</i> : A Drama	Rabindranath Tagore	351	IV
<i>Mukta-Dhara</i> : An Appreciation	K. R. Kripalani	347	IV
Persian Ethics	Prof. Hadi Hasan	127	II
Poetry & the Analysis of the Ego	Dr. A. Aronson	41	I

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Part</i>
Rural England	Rabindranath Tagore	64	I
Sakuntala : Its inner meaning	Rabindranath Tagore	119	II
Surendranath Tagore	Rabindranath Tagore	173	II
<b>POEMS</b>			
Atonement	Rabindranath Tagore	185	III
Bird-Men, The	"	285	IV
Birthday	"	63	I
Four Poems	"	244	III
Gandhi Maharaj	"	346	IV
Indictment	"	298	IV
Two Poems	"	7	I
Festival of Lights	Sarojini Naidu	234	III
Mid-day	C. F. Andrews	20	I
Before the Sun rises	A. Aronson	260	III

## INDEX TO VOL. VI. NEW SERIES.

( Arranged Author-wise )

<i>Name</i>	<i>Page</i>
Adhikari, P. B.	79
Andrews, C. F.	9, 20, 91
Aronson, Dr.	41, 260, 317
Bikrama Jit Hasrat	67, 133, 331
Bose, Nirmal Kumar	21, 163, 299
Hasan, Hadi	127, 248
Hutheesing, Krishna	311
Kripalani, K. R.	347
Mozumdar, S. N.	265
Mallik, Gurdial	35
Naidu, Sarojini	234
Raju, P. T.	103, 235
Sykes, Marjorie	57
Tagore, Rabindranath	1, 7, 63, 64, 119, 147, 185, 187, 244, 285, 287, 298, 346, 351
Tagore, Rathindranath	173





